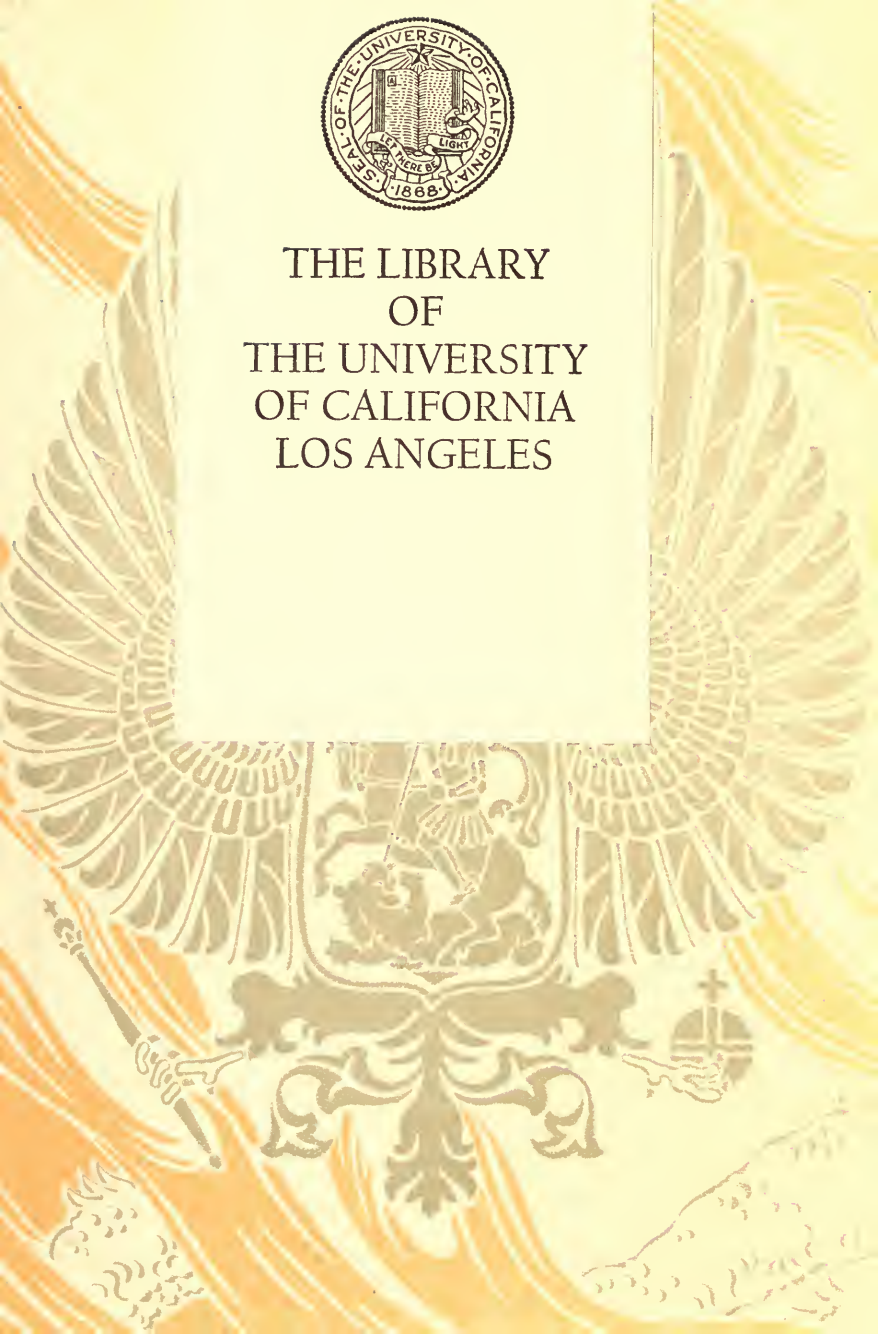


# DOWN AMONG MEN

*Will Levington Comfort*



THE LIBRARY  
OF  
THE UNIVERSITY  
OF CALIFORNIA  
LOS ANGELES











DOWN AMONG MEN





*Down Among  
Men*

BY

WILL LEVINGTON COMFORT

AUTHOR OF "ROUTLEDGE RIDES ALONE,"  
"FATE KNOCKS AT THE DOOR," ETC.

NEW YORK  
GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

COPYRIGHT, 1913  
BY GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

## TO THE MEN OF THE UPPER ROOM

. . . AND THIS IS THE STORY I TOLD YOU THROUGH THE SEVERAL NIGHTS: OF THE MAN WHO CAME UP THROUGH THE DARK AND THE FIGHTING (OFTEN IN SUCH A RUCK OF FIGHTING THAT HE COULDN'T HEAR VOICES); HOW HE WAS PUNISHED BY MEN, BROKEN BY SELF, AND HEALED BY A WOMAN; INDEED, BUT FOR HER, HE MIGHT HAVE CHOSEN THE LONG WAY OF THE BRUTE TO PUT ON HIS POWERS AND ATTAIN THE CERTAIN ROYALTY OF THE HUMAN ADULT IN THIS YEAR OF OUR LORD. SHE PAID THE PRICE; SHE WAS THE MAN-MAKER; SHE SAW THE WORLD-MAN SHINING AHEAD. . . . IT IS A STORY OF THE PATH AT OUR FEET, OF THE COMPASSIONATES WHO DRAW NEAR TO SPEAK, WHEN WE ARE BRAVE ENOUGH TO LISTEN, OF THE WOMEN WHO WALK BESIDE US. A TALE OF THE ROAD AS WE GO—MANY ARE AHEAD, MANY BEHIND—BUT WE DO NOT TRAVEL THIS STRETCH AGAIN.

—W. L. C.



## KAO LIANG

*No one thought of kao liang.*

*Morning did not mention it in his great story; even Duke Fallows did not think of it.*

*Kao liang, the millet of China. Inland seas of it are there, green in the beginning of its flow, dull gold in its high tide.*

*A ruffianly scouring grain. Rice is its little white sister. Millet is the strength of the beast, the mash of the world's poor. A hundred millions of acres of Asia are in yield or waiting for kao liang to-day. Remember the poor.*

*In Manchuria kao liang grows strong and high. Its fox-tails brush the brows of the tall Chinese of the north country. It brushed the caps of the Russian soldiers one certain Fall.*

*The Censurer came with the planting in that year. Kao liang was like a soft green mould upon the hills and valleys when he came to his battle-fields. He was watching for a browner harvest and a ruddier planting. Fall plowing and red planting—for that, he came to Liaoyang.*

*His soldiers trampled it, devastated the young grain with their formations, foraged their beasts upon it. Yet the millet grew, hardened and covered the earth—for the poor must be served. Out of flood and gale and burning, it waxed great, filling the hills and the hollows, closing in on the city, climbing thinly to the Passes.*

*Its protest to the invasion was mute as China's, but it did not run. Before the Japanese, it closed in. It was ripe when the brown flanker crossed the Taitse. It was ripe when two Slav chiefs took their thousands forth to form the anvil upon which the flanker was to be broken. The Cossacks had been feeding their beasts upon it for many days, and they drank in the deep hollows where the roots of kao liang held the rain. It was ripe for the world's poor, when the Sentimentalist strode forth at last—the hammer that was to break the spine of the flanker.*



## CONTENTS

### BOOK ONE

	PAGE
A FIELD . . . . .	1

### BOOK TWO

THE HILL-CABIN . . . . .	115
--------------------------	-----

### BOOK THREE

THE BARE-HEADED MAN . . . . .	239
-------------------------------	-----





**BOOK I**  
**AFIELD**



## BOOK I

# AFIELD

### 1

THE town of Rosario was ahead. The cavalry expected to sup and sleep there. Chance of firing presently from the natives was pure routine. John Morning, back in the second troop, on the horse of a missing soldier, wondered if years of service and exploration would make him ever as great a correspondent as Mr. Reeve Kennard looked. The wide, sloping shoulders of the Personage were to be seen occasionally when the trail crooked, far forward and near the General.

The bit of fighting was over before the rear troopers got rightly into the skirmish-line (every fourth trooper holding four horses); and now the men breathed and smoked cigarettes in one more Luzon town; and another *Alcalde's* house was turned into headquarters. . . . This was a brigade expedition of December, 1899. Two weeks before the General had ridden out of Manila. Various pieces of infantry had been left to garrison the many towns which would not stay held without pins. Two or three days more, then Batangas, and the big ride was over, the lower Luzon incision complete, and drainage established.

Morning, with the troopers, had to look to his mount in regulation fashion, and did not reach Headquarters until after the others. The *Alcalde's* house in Rosario as usual stood large among the straw-thatched bamboo huts. The little upper room which Morning had come to expect through the courtesy of the staff, was easily found. The saddle-bags and blanket-rolls of Mr. Kennard and his companion, a civilian, named Calvert were

already there, each in a corner. Morning's thought was that he would hear these men talk after supper. In a third corner he placed his canteen, and shyly tucked away in the shadow, the limp haversack.

There was a small table in the room, of black wood worn shiny by the hands of the house, as the black wood of the floors was worn shiny by the bare feet of servants. Upon the table was a small sheath-knife, the brass handle of which was inscribed *Mio Amigo*.

It becomes necessary to explain that the human male is discriminating about his loot, by the time he has been afield two weeks in a tropical island, especially if he has camped in a fresh town every night. The day's march makes him value every pound that he can throw away, for he has already been chafed by each essential button and buckle. A tin pail of silver pesos unearthed in a church had passed from hand to hand among the soldiers. As the stress of the days increased (and the artificial sense of values narrowed to the fundamentals such as food and tobacco and sleep), Morning had observed with curious approval that the silver hoard leaked out of the command entirely—to return to the natives for further offerings to the priests.

So the knife on the table aroused no desire. It was not even a good knife, but *Mio Amigo* took his eye, as if affording a bit of insight to the native mind. It could not have been wanted by Mr. Kennard or Mr. Calvert, since it lay upon the table. Morning put it in his coat, knowing he would toss it away before to-morrow's sun was high. In his hot moist hand the brass-handle sent up a smell of verdigris. A little later in the village road, he encountered Mr. Reeve Kennard in the act of purchasing ancient canned stuff from a native-woman, too lame to run before the cavalry. Morning was not natural in the Presence.

The great man was broad and round and thick. He criticised generals afield, and in Washington when times

were dry. He had dined with the President and signed the interview. His head dropped forward slightly, his chin sunk in its own cushions. He bought the native wares with the air of a man who is keeping a city in suspense, and the city deserves it. Morning stood by and did not speak. There was no reason for him to stay; he did not expect companionship; he had nothing to say; no money with which to buy food—and yet, having established himself there, he could not withdraw without remark of some kind. At least he felt this; also he felt cruelly the cub. He was at home in this service with packers and enlisted men, but always as now, officers, and others of his own work, made him feel the upstart.

Mr. Kennard now turned to perceive him, his eyes opening in the “Bless me—what sort is this?” manner of the straying Englishman; and John Morning, quite in a funk, fell to enforcing an absurd interest in the native sheath-knife. Kennard was not drawn to such a slight affair, but perceiving the menial in Morning, allowed him to carry some of his purchases back to Headquarters.

Supper was a serious matter to the boy. He had no money nor provisions. In the usual case, money would have been no good—but there were a few things left in the shop of the lame woman. The field ration was light; and while he would not go hungry if the staff-officers knew, it was a delicate matter to make known his grubless state. Morning rambled over the town, after helping Mr. Kennard to quarters, and returned empty to the upper room. Mr. Calvert was there and appeared to see Morning for the first time. Calvert was a slender quiet chap, and believed in what he had to say.

“Where did you get that little sheath-knife you showed Mr. Kennard?” he asked abruptly.

Morning sickened before the man’s eyes. His life had been fought out in dark, rough places. He was as near twenty as twenty-five. He had the way of the under-dog, who does not expect to be believed, looking

for the worst of it, whether guilty or not. He told Calvert he had found the knife on this table.

"I thought I put it in my saddle-bags," Calvert said.

"You are very welcome to it. The *Mio Amigo* made me look at it twice——"

"That's why I wanted it. Take this for your trouble."

Calvert placed a bit of paper money on the table between them.

"It was no trouble. I don't want the money."

"Take it along. Don't think of it again."

Morning didn't want to appear stubborn. This was the peculiarity of the episode. The thought of taking the money repelled him. The connection of the money with supper occurred, but not with the strength of his dislike to appear perverse or bad-tempered. . . . He saw all clearly after he had accepted the paper, but the matter was then closed. He was very miserable. He had proved his inferiority. The little brush with big men had been too much for him. He belonged among the enlisted. . . .

He went to the lame woman and bought a bottle of pimientos and a live chicken. The latter he traded for a can of bacon with a soldier.

## 2

**I**MPERIAL HOTEL, Tokyo, early in March, 1904. . . . The Japanese war office had finally decided to permit six American correspondents to accompany each army. The Americans heard the news with gravity. There were two men for every place. Only three Japanese armies were in conception at this time. The first six Americans were easily chosen—names of men that allowed no doubt; and this initial group, beside being the first to take the field, was elected to act as a committee to appoint the second and third sets of six—twelve places and thirty waiting. The work at hand was delicate.

The committee was in session in the room of Mr. Reeve Kennard. Five of the second list had been settled upon when the name of John Morning (of the Open Market) was brought up. It was Duke Fallows of San Francisco, who spoke:

"I don't know John Morning, but I know his stuff. It's big stuff; he's the big man. We've gone too far without him already. He has more right to be on the committee than I. He was here before I was. He has minded his own business and taken quarters apart. I had no intention of breaking into the picture this way, but the fact is, I expected John Morning to go in first on the second list. Now that there is only one place left, there really can't be any doubt about the name."

Mr. Reeve Kennard of the *World-News* now arose and waited for silence. He got it. The weight of Mr. Reeve Kennard was felt in this room. Everything in it had weight—saddle and leggings of pigskin, gauntlets, typewriters, cameras, the broadside of riding-breeches, and a little arsenal of modern inventions which only stop firing upon formal request. Without his hat, Mr. Reeve Kennard was different, however. Much weight that you granted under the big hat, had left that arid country for the crowded arteries of neck and jowl and jaw, or, indeed, for the belted cosmic center itself. He said:

"Mr. Fallows talks wide. This Morning is out on a shoe-string; and while he may have a bit of force to handle certain kinds of action, it isn't altogether luck—his not getting a good berth. The young man hasn't made good at home. He hasn't the money backing to stand his share of the expense. The War Office suggests that each party of correspondents employ a sutler——"

Fallows was still standing and broke in:

"I'm interested in that matter of making good at home. I've seen the work of most Americans here, and I believe John Morning to be the best war-writer sent

out from the States. As for the shoe-string, I'll furnish his tooth-brush and dinnercoat—if the sutler insists——”

“We understand very clearly the enthusiasm of Mr. Fallows who wants a second column-man for his paper. Doubtless this Morning is open——”

“I hadn't thought of it, but certainly the *Western States* would profit, if John Morning turned part of his product there. How about your *World-News* on that?”

“I favor Mr. Borden for the sixth place in second column,” Kennard said simply.

“Borden reached Tokyo three weeks after Morning—and never campaigned before.”

“He's one of the best of the younger men in New York—a Washington correspondent of big influence——”

“I have no objection to him, except as one to take the place that belongs to John Morning. I can't see him there.”

Kennard looked about him. Morning was not well known, having been little seen at the *Imperial* in the last six weeks. Fallows had not helped him by saying he was the best war-writer sent out from the States; still in a general way he could not be put aside. Kennard saw this.

“I wasn't going to hurt Morning badly, if I could help it,” he said, “but Mr. Fallows has rather forced it. This Morning isn't straight. We caught him stealing a sheath-knife from the saddle-bags of Archibald Calvert down in Luzon four or five years ago. Morning said he found it on a table in the room assigned to us. He took money from Calvert for restoring the knife.”

Fallows laughed at this.

“I can't believe the story,” he said. “The man who did the stuff I've read, isn't stealing sheath-knives from another's saddle-bags. . . . Oh, I don't mean that it didn't seem true to you, Kennard——”

Kennard had waited for the last, and was not good to look at until it came. He turned quickly to the others. Borden was chosen.



"You've still got a place to fill in the first list," said Fallows.

The committee was now excited. The five faces turned to the Westerner.

"I repeat, Kennard, that your remarks may be within the letter of truth, but I wouldn't campaign in the same army with a man who'd bring up a thing like that against a boy—and five years afterward. Understand, I have never spoken a word to John Morning——"

"You're not giving up your place?" said the committee.

"Exactly."

"Then you'll take Borden's with the second——?"

"I have nothing against Borden. I wouldn't spoil the chance of a man already chosen."

"Then first with the third army," urged the committee.

"I can do better than that," said Fallows. "Gentlemen, I thank you, and beg to withdraw."

## 3

JOHN MORNING waved back the rickshaw coolie at the door of the little Japanese Inn, where he had been having his own way for several weeks, and walked down the Shiba road toward the *Imperial* hotel. He had half-expected to get on the committee, which meant work with the first army and a quick start; failing in that, he looked for his name to be called early in the second list, and was on the way now to find out. Morning shared the passion of the entire company to get afield at any cost.

Reasoning, however, did not lift his restlessness and apprehension. He had not been on the spot. He had been unable to afford life at the *Imperial*; and yet, the costliness of it was not altogether vain, since the old

hotel had become a center of the world in the matter of war-correspondence. Japan reckoned with it as the point of foreign civilian force. While his brain could not organize a condition that would spoil his chance, Morning's more unerring inner sense warned him that he was not established, as he walked in the rain.

His name was not posted in any of the three groups. The card blurred after his first devouring glance, so that he had to read again and a third time. For a moment he was out of hand—seething, eruptive. Yet there was nothing to fight. . . .

Corydon Tait, a young Englishman with whom he had often talked and laughed, was standing by. Tait's name was not down. Morning controlled himself to speak courteously.

The Englishman looked beyond him at the card. A chill settled upon Morning's self-destructive heat. This was new in his world. In the momentary misunderstanding, he grasped Tait's arm.

"Really, old chap, I'd prefer you not to do that," the other said, drawing his arm away. "It must be plain that I don't know you."

"I thought you were joking," said Morning.

## 4

**B**ACK on Shiba Road in the beginning of dusk, he turned to the native inn. The door slid open before his hand touched the latch; his figure having been seen through the papered lattice. The proprietor bowed to the matting and hissed with prolonged seriousness, hissed in fact until the American had removed and exchanged his shoes for sandals. The hand-maidens appeared and bowed laughingly. The old kitchen drudge emerged from her chimney and ogled. The mother of the house took the place beside her lord on the rostrum-

ōf-the-pencils. She did not hiss, but it was very clear that the matting under the white man's feet was far above her in worthiness.

There was something of this formality with his every entrance. Morning had felt silly during the first days as he passed through the hedge of bent backs; the empty cringing and favor-groveling had seemed indecent. But now (in the dusk of the house before the candles) a faint touch of healing came from it. They had all served him. He had been fearfully over-served. They had bothered his work through excessive service—so many were the hands and so little to do. The women were really happy to work for him. To-night, a queer gladness clung to their welcome. He had fallen indeed to sense it. He was starving for reality, for some holy thing. They had stripped him at the *Imperial*. In his heart he was trying to make a reality now of this mockery of Japanese self-extinction.

The bath-boy, wet from steam, with only a loin-cloth about him, followed Morning to his room. The American was not allowed to bathe alone; would not have been allowed to undress himself, had he not insisted upon the privilege. He sat in a tub, three walls of which were wood and the fourth of iron. Against the outside of the latter, burned a furious fire of charcoal. For the benefits of this bath, he was begged to make no haste and to occupy his mind with matters of the higher life. A moment or two before the water reached a boiling-point, Morning was allowed to escape. Exceeding pressure of business was occasionally accepted as precluding the chance of a bath for one day, but to miss two days in succession, without proving that he had bathed elsewhere, meant a loss of respect, and a start of household whispering.

He was sick to get back to work, turned to it for restoration and forgetfulness, as a man to a drug. Moreover, there was need, for he was on space. Two or three

papers in the Mid-west used what he could write, though he had no holding contracts, and had left Chicago with such haste to catch a steamer, that there had been no chance to make an arrangement, whereby these papers might have used the same story simultaneously. And then, there had been a delay of nearly a day in Vancouver. This time in Chicago would have been enough for the establishment of a central office and an agent on percentage, who could have enlarged his market without limit, and cut down his work to one letter a day. Instead, he did the same story now, from three different angles. It had been this way before. With war in the air, Morning was unable to breathe at home. Off he went, without a return ticket—tourist cars and dingy second-class steamer passage—but with a strange confidence in his power to write irresistibly. It was like a mark—this faith of his in the ability to appeal.

All his life he had lived second-class. To-night he wondered if it would always be so; if there was not something in the face of John Morning, something that others saw at once, which placed him instantly among culls and seconds in the mysterious adjustments of the world. They had made him feel so at the *Imperial*, before this episode. Men who didn't write ten lines a day were there on big incomes; and others, little older than he, with only two or three fingers of his ability, on a safe salary and flexible expense account.

The day was brought back to him again and again. The cut of Corydon Tait had crippled him. He felt it now crawling swiftly along the nerves of his limbs until it reached his brain, and remaining there coldly like undigested matter in a sick body. He felt his face queerly. There was neither fat nor flabbiness upon it. He could feel the bone. His fingers brushed his mouth, and a sort of burn came to him. It was the finest thing about John Morning. There was a bit of poetry about it, a touch of tenderness, finer than strength. Passion was in the mouth, intensity without intentness, not a trace of the

boarish, nor bovine. It is true you often see the ruin of such a mouth in quiet places where those of drugs and drinks are served; but you see as well the finished picture upon the faces of those men lit with world's service, who have heard the voice of the human spirit, and are loved by the race, because they have forgotten how to love themselves.

Morning knew it only as his weakness. It was the symbol to-night of his failure. . . . Those at the *Imperial* had seen it; they had dared to deny him because of it. The greatest among the war-men were thin-lipped and sinewy-jawed—the soldier face. . . . He knew much about war; none had campaigned more joyously than he. In the midst of peril, courage seemed altogether obvious and easy; his fearlessness was too natural for him to be surprised at it, though it surprised others. . . .

The typewriter buzzed on. Wearily he caught up the trend, but the drive was gone, although there was hardly a lull in the registering of the keys for two-thirds of a page. Always before, this sort of hackwork had been done with a dream of the field ahead. His forces fused. He had been denied a column. His hand brushed across his face and John Morning was ashamed—ashamed of his poverty, of his work, of his own nature, which made a tragedy of the cut of Corydon Tait; ashamed of the heat in his veins from the stimulants he had drunk; ashamed because he had not instantly demanded his rights at the *Imperial*; ashamed of the mess of a man he was, a fool of his volition and vitality, commonness stamped on his every feature.

Morning's affinity for alcohol was peculiar. He worked with it successfully. So resilient was his health that he was usually fresh in the morning. Often he had finished a long evening of work on pretty good terms with himself, the later pages of copy coming in a cloud of speed. . . . The copy-producing seemed to use up the whipping spirit, rather than himself; at least, he

treasured this illusion. The first bottles of rice-beer lasted the longest. . . . He recalled now that the maid-servants had twice heated *sake* for him at supper; as for the rice-beer he had been more than ever thirsty to-night. He glanced into the corner where the bottles were and a sense of uncleanness came over him—as if his body were flowing with the slow spirit, like a sea-marsh at high tide.

. . . He heard the shafts of a rickshaw grate upon the gravel outside. Amoya had come; it was midnight. He opened the papered lattice. The runner was bowing by his cart, holding his broad hat with both hands. Morning covered his machine, put fresh charcoal in the brazier, caught up his hat and overcoat, and shuffled down the stairway, holding his slippers on with his toes. The door-boy gave him his shoes and opened the way to the street. Morning greeted Amoya with a pat on the shoulder, and climbed into the cart.

“Yoshuwara?” the runner asked.

“No, you shameless ruffian!”

“No?” Amoya squeaked pleasantly.

“No—not—no must do.”

Morning waved his arm, signifying solitary and peaceful enjoyment of the night air and contemplation of the dark city. These night journeys had become the cooling features of his day. Amoya was a living marvel, the rickshaw runner incomparable—tireless, eager, very proud of his work; too old to be spoiled. He was old; indeed, enough to be Morning’s father, but his limbs were young, and his great trunk full of power unabated.

The night was dark, damp, no moon nor star. The cold which was almost tempted thinly to crust the open drains, was welcome to the man’s nostrils. Amoya warmed and gathered speed. Up the broad Shiba Road he sped, past the far dim lights of the highway, past Shiba temple, the tombs of the Ronins, past the cavalry barracks (by far the best joke on Japan), and the last of the known land-marks.

Now Morning suffered strange temptations. Few white men who have lived any time in Japan have escaped. A Japanese house with every creature comfort was within his resources even now; wholesome food, *sake*, rice-beer were cheap; excellent service, even such service as Amoya's was laughably cheap. Why not sink into this life and quit the agony? . . . Why did he think of it as *sinking* into this life? Why did he agonize anyway? . . . There was always a fresh sore on him somewhere. Surely other men did not burn back and forth every day as he did.

The shame came again. He ordered Amoya back within an hour, left him at the door of the Inn, drenched with sweat and delighted with his extra fare.

Morning slid open the door of his room. Nothing could be seen but the glow of the brazier, yet he knew some one was within. . . . A series of mattresses and robes had been taken out from a chest of drawers and made up on the matting. The women as usual, had waited for him to go out. He lit the lamp.

A little Japanese maid-servant was curled up asleep at the foot of his bed. Morning sat down upon the cushion and mused curiously. . . . It was thus that Naomi had ordered Ruth to steal into the couch at the feet of Boaz. Ruth had found a home, and was not long allowed to make herself glad with mere gleanings. . . . It was this sort of thing that made Morning hate Japan. In the eyes of the old, limp-backed Inn-keeper, this child was a woman. He would not have dared to delegate a mere maid-servant to ply the ancient art with his guest, but there were extenuations here: the delicacy and subtlety of the little one's falling asleep, and the child-like freshness of the offering. It was this last that stung Morning, because he knew the old Japanese found a commercial value in this very adolescence.

He had smiled at this child during the day, and asked her name—Moto-san—and repeated it after her, as one might have done the name of a child. She had just come

in from the fields, reported the bath-boy who preëmpted any leakage of English whatsoever, and who was frequently on the verge of being understood. . . . Her hands showed labor, and she was not ashen as the Japanese beauties must be, but sweet and fragrant—and so little.

“It is the same the world over, when they come in from the fields,” he said. “Good God, she ought to be sleeping with her dolls. . . . Poor little bit of a girl in a man’s country . . . and they sent you in here to keep me from night-riding. One cannot complain of hospitality . . . Moto-san. . . . Moto-san. . . .”

She stirred, and snuggled deeper. “She is truly asleep,” he thought.

“Moto-san!” he said softly again.

The girl opened her eyes, which suddenly filled with fright. Morning patted her shoulder gently. And now she sat up staring at him, and remembering.

He leaned his head upon his palm and shut his eyes—sign of falling asleep—then pointed her to the door. . . . Morning could not tell if she were pleased. It all seemed very strange to her—her smile was frightened. He repeated the gesture. She had slid off the bed to the matting upon her knees, facing him. And now she bowed to the floor, and backed out so, bowing with frightened smile. . . . He reflected dismally that she had lost value for the eye of the Inn-keeper.

## 5

**M**ORNING’S idea as he reached the *Imperial* next forenoon was to call the committee together, or a working part of it, and to demand why he had been barred from the projected columns. . . . The high and ancient lobby was practically empty. It appeared that the correspondents *de rigueur* and *en masse* were posing for a photograph on the rear balcony, which was reached



through the billiard room. Morning went there and stood by the window while the picture was taken. It required an hour or more. He was passed and re-passed. Two or three Americans seemed on the point of asking him to take his place with the fifty odd war-men, but they checked themselves before speaking. Morning felt vilely marked. Stamina did not form within him. He did not realize that something finer than physical courage was challenged.

He watched the backs of the formation—the squared shoulders, the planted feet. He knew that in the minds of the posing company, each was looking at his own. From each individual to his lesser or greater circle, the finished picture would go. It would be reproduced in the periodicals which sent these men—“*our special correspondent*”—designated. Personal friends in each case would choose their own from the crowd. The little laughing chap in brown corduroys who arranged the group was the best and bravest man in field photography. He left the camera now to his assistant, and took place with the others. Men of twenty campaigns were there. The dim eyes of a certain little old man had looked upon more of war than any other living human being. In one brain or another, pictures were coiled from every campaign around the world during the past forty years. Never before in history had so many famous war-men gathered together. It would be a famous picture. . . . He, John Morning, would hear it in the future:

“ . . . Why weren't you in that picture?”

“I sat in the billiard room behind at a window. I had been barred out of a place among the first three columns. I was under a cloud of some kind.”

No, that would not be his answer. Various lies occurred.

This little mental activity completed itself without any volition. It was finished now, like the picture outside—the materials scattering. The idea of the truth merely appeared through a mental habit of looking at

two sides—a literary habit. It had brought no direct relation to John Morning. But the lies had brought their direct relation.

He could not remain at his place by the window, now that the fifty came in for drink and play. He was afraid to demand what evil concerning him was in the minds of men; afraid something would be uncovered that was true. He felt the uncleanness of drink upon him, and a moral softening from years of newspaper work, a training begun in glibness, which does not recognize the rights of men, but obeys a City Desk. He could not organize a contending force; and yet loathed the thought of return to the Japanese Inn. He was not ready to face himself alone.

It had never come to him so stirringly as now—the sense of *something* within, utterly weary of imprisonment and forced companionship with the visible John Morning. His misery was a silent unswerving shame. A feverish impulse almost controlled him to take something either to lift him away, or permit him to sink in abandonment from the area of pain.

He stood near the desk in the lobby. Duke Fallows was coming. The Californian's legs, in their worn corduroys, were far too lean for the big bony knees—a tall man of forty, with tired and sunken eyes and sunken mouth. Fallows had a reputation. Its strongly drawing side-issue was his general and encompassing, though fastidious, love of women. Someone had whispered that even if a man has the heart of a volcano, its outpouring must be spread rather thin in places to cover all women. He was out for the *Western States*, not only to show war, but to show it up. Certainly he loved the underdog, which is an epigram for stating that he was an anarchist.

No anarchist could be gentler to meet, nor more terrible to read. Fallows owned a formidable interest in the *Western States*; otherwise he would have had to print

himself. The rest of that San Francisco property was just an excellent newspaper. Its effort was to balance Duke Fallows; sometimes it seemed trying to extinguish him in order to save itself. It brought sanity and common-sense and the group-souled observation of affairs, to say nothing of news and advertising—all to cool the occasional column of this sick man. To a few, however, on the Pacific Coast, since his new assignment was announced—the Russo-Japanese war and Duke Fallows meant the same thing. The majority said: "Watch the *Western States* boom in circulation. They are sending Fallows to Asia."

The two stood together, Fallows looking down. Morning was broad in brow and shoulder; slender otherwise and of medium height.

"I'm Fallows."

"Yes."

The tall man's eyes turned upward so that only the whites were visible. He fingered his brow as if to pluck something forth through the bone.

"Come on upstairs."

Morning followed the large, slow knees. It was less that the knees wobbled—rather the frailty of the hangings and pinnings. They did the three high flights and began again, finally drawing up in a broad roof-room that smelled of new harness and overlooking an especially hard-packed part of Tokyo, toward the Ginza. Fallows lit the fire that was ready in the grate and sprawled wearily.

"Where did you study religion, Morning?"

"I didn't."

"That's one way to get it."

The sound of his own laugh came to Morning's ears and hurt him. Fallows' eyes were shut. There was no trace of a smile around the wan mouth.

"You'll likely be more religious before you're done. I mean many things by being religious—a man's inability

to lie to himself for one; a passion for the man who's down—that's another. . . . I've read your stuff. It's full of religion——”

Now it seemed to Morning as if he had just entered a fascinating wilderness; apart from this, he saw something about the worn, distressed mouth of Fallows that made him think of himself last night. There was one more effect from this first brush. Something happened in Morning's mind with that sentence about the inability to lie to one's self. It was like a shot in the midst of a flock of quails. A pair of birds was down, but the rest of the flock was off and away, like the fragments of an explosive.

“I read some of your stuff about the Filipino woman —‘woman of the river-banks,’ you called her. Another time you looked into a nipa-shack where an old man was dying of *beri-beri*, and an old woman sat at bay at the door——”

These brought back the pictures to Morning, and the dimension behind the actual light and shade and matter. The healing, too, was that someone had seen his work, and seen from it all that he saw,—the artist's true ailment, which praise of the many cannot furnish. It gave him heart like an answer to prayer, because he had been very needful.

“You must have come up hard. Did you, boy?” Fallows asked after a moment.

“Perhaps you would say so.”

“Farm first?”

“Yes——”

“And a father who misunderstood?”

“A good deal of the misunderstanding was my own bull-headedness, I see now——”

“And the mother, John Morning?”

“I was too little——”

“Ah——”

Morning found himself saying eagerly a little later:

"And then the city streets—selling newspapers, errands, sick all the time, though I didn't know it. Then I got to the horses. . . . I found something in the stables good for me. I liked horses so well that it hurt. I learned to sleep nights and eat regularly—but read so much rot. Still, it was all right to be a stable-boy. A big race-horse man took me on to ship with stock. I've been all over America by freight with the racers—from track to track. I used to let the tramps ride, but they were dangerous—especially the young ones. I had to stay awake. An old tramp could come in anytime—and go to sleep—but younger ones are bad. They beat you up for a few dimes. I was bad, too, bad as hell. . . . And then I rode—there was money, but it went. I got sick keeping light. The pounds over a hundred beat me out of the game—except the jumps. I've ridden the jumpers in England, too—been all broken up. In a fall you can't always get clear. . . . All this was before I was eighteen—it was my kind of education."

"I like it," said Fallows.

"One night in New York I heard a newspaper man talk. . . . It was in a back-room bar on Sixth avenue. I see now he was a bit broken down. He looked to me then all that was splendid and sophisticated. I wanted to be like him——"

Fallows bent forward, his face tender as a father's. "You poor little chap," he said, as if he did not see Morning now, but the listening boy in the back-room bar.

"You see, I never really got the idea of having money—it went so quickly. The idea of a big bundle didn't get a chance to sink in. I've had several hundred dollars at once from riding—but the next day's races, or the next, got it. What I'm trying to say is—winnings didn't seem to belong to me. Poverty was a habit. I always think yet in nickels and dimes. I seem to belong—steerage. It wasn't long after I listened to that reporter, that I got a newspaper job, chasing pictures. A year

after that the wars began. I went out first on my own hook; in fact, I think you'd call it that now. I seem to get into a sort of mania to be off—when the papers begin to report trouble. I didn't know I was poorly fixed this time, until here in Tokyo I saw how the others go about it. Dinner-clothes, and all sorts of money invested in them—whether the war makes good or not——”

“I was right,” Fallows said finally. He had listened as a forest in a drouth listens for rain.

Morning was embarrassed. He had been caught in the current of the other's listening. It was not his way at all to talk so much. He wasn't tamed altogether; and then he had been extra hurt by the night and the day. An element of savagery arose, with the suspicion that Fallows might be making fun of him.

“What were you right about, Mr. Fallows?”

“You've got an especial guardian.”

Morning waited. The fuel was crackling. The Californian watched the fire and finally began to talk.

“You're *one of them*. I saw it in your stuff. Then they told me here that you lived in a little Japanese hotel alone. That's another reason. Your kind come up alone—always alone. To-day I saw you watching that picture business. You looked tired—as if you had a long way yet to swim against the current. You had a fight on—inside and out. You'll keep on fighting inside, long after the world outside has called a truce. When you're as old as I am—maybe before—you'll have peace inside and out.”

Morning was bewildered; and had somewhat braced himself in scepticism, as if the other were reading a fortune out of a cup.

“You're one of them, and you've got a guardian—greater than ten of these militia press-agents. You don't know it yet, but your stuff shows it; your life shows it. You try to do what *you* want—and you're forced to do better. You'll be kept steerage, as you call it,—kept

down among men—until you see that it's the place for a white man to be, and that all these other things—dinner-coats and expense accounts—are but tricks to cover a weakness. You'll be held down among men until you love them, and would be sick away from service with them. You won't be able to rest unless you're helping. You'll choke when you say 'Brother.' You'll answer their misery and cry from your sleep, 'I'm coming.' You hear them with your soul now, but the brain won't listen yet. You'll go it blind for the under-dog—and find out afterwards that you were immortally right."

Morning's breast was burning. It was more the fiery flood of kindness than the words. He had been roughed so thoroughly that he couldn't take words; he needed a sign.

"The time will come when you'll hear your soul saying, 'Get down among men, John, and help.' You'll jump. A storm of hell will follow you if you don't. They'll throw you overboard and even the whale won't stomach you if you don't. 'Get down among men, John'; that's your orders to Nineveh."

The Californian changed the subject abruptly:

"They were good enough to give me a place with the first column, but I can't see it quite. There's going to be too much supervision. These Japanese are rivet-headed. I like the other end. New Chwang is still open. Lowenkampf is in command there. I knew him years ago in Vienna. Good man for a soldier—old Lowenkampf. He'll take us in. Let's go over——"

"I won't be exactly 'healed' for a long stay. My money is coming here——"

"Let it pile up. I'll stake you for the Russian picnic."

Morning wanted it so intensely that he feared Duke Fallows might die before they got to Lowenkampf and New Chwang. . . . He was terrorized by this thought: "Fallows has somehow failed to understand

about me not getting a column, and not being asked into the picture. When he finds out, he'll change his mind. . . ."

He wanted to speak, gathered strength with violent effort, but Fallows just now was restlessly eager to go below.

## 6

SECOND class, that night, on the Pacific liner *Manchuria*, forward among the rough wooden bunks, eating from tin-plates. . . . It had been Morning's suggestion. Fallows had accepted it laughingly, but as a good omen.

"Two can travel cheaply as one," he said. "I'm quite as comfortable as usual."

Morning realized that his friend was not comfortable at best. He was too well himself, too ambitious, quite to realize the other's illness. Morning found a quality of understanding that he had expected vaguely to find sometime from some girl, but he could not return the gift in kind, nor right sympathy for the big man's weakness. Fallows didn't appear to expect it.

They left the *Manchuria* at Nagasaki, after the Inland Sea passage, found a small ship for Tientsin direct; also a leftover winter storm on the Yellow Sea. Morning, at work, typewriter on his knees, looked up one night as they neared the mouth of the Pei-ho. An oil-lamp swung above them smokily; the tired ship still creaked and wallowed in the gale. Fallows has been regarding him thoughtfully from time to time.

"You keep bolstering me up, Duke, and I don't seem to help you any," Morning said. "Night and day, I worry you with the drum of this machine—when you're too sick to work; and here you are traveling like a tramp for me. I'm used to it, but it makes you worse. You



staked me and made possible a bit of real work this campaign—why won't you let me do some stuff for you?"

"Don't you worry about what I've done—that's particularly my affair. Call it a gamble. Perhaps I chose you as a man chooses his place to build a house. . . ."

Morning wondered at times if the other was not half dead with longing for a woman. . . . In the fifteen years which separated the two men in age lay all the difference between a soldier and an artist. Morning had to grant finally that the Californian had no abiding interest in the war they were out to cover; and this was so foreign that the rift could not be bridged entirely.

"War—why, I love the thought!" Fallows exclaimed. "The fight's the thing—but this isn't it. This is just a big butchery of the blind. The Japanese aren't sweet in this passion. We won't see the real Russia out here in Asia. Real Russia is against all this looting and lusting. Real Russia is at home singing, writing, giving itself to be hanged. Real Russia is glad to die for a dream. This soldier Russia isn't ready to die. Just a stir in the old torpor of decadence—this Russia we're going to. You'll see it—its stench rising. . . . I want the other war. I want to live to fight in the other war, when the under-dog of this world—the under-dog of Russia and England and America, runs no more, cowers no more—but stops, turns to fight to the death. I want the barricades, the children fired with the spirit, women coming down to the ruck, the girls from the factories, harlots from the slums. The women won't stay at home in the war I mean—and you and I, John, must be there,—to die every morning——"

Yet Fallows didn't write this. He lay on his back dreaming about it. Always the women came into his thoughts. Morning held hard to the game at hand. . . . Lying on his back—thus the Californian became identified in his mind. And strange berths they found, none stranger than the one at last in the unspeakable

Chinese hotel at New Chwang. Morning remembered the date—4/4/'04—for he put it down in the black notebook, after smashing a centipede on the wall with it. They were awakened the next morning by the passing of a brigade of Russian infantry in full song. Each looking for “good-morning” in the eyes of the other, found that and tears.

The Chinese house stirred galvanically at mid-day—from the farthest chicken-coop to the guest-chamber of the most revered. Lowenkampf, commanding the port, in sky-blue uniform, entered with his orderly and embraced a certain sick man lying on a rough bench, between his own blankets. It was just so and not otherwise, nor were the “European” strangers of distinguished appearance. They had come in the night, crossing the river in a junk, instead of waiting for the Liao-launch. They had not sought the Manchurian hotel, where Europeans of quality usually go, but had asked for native quartering. So rarely had this happened, that the tradition was forgotten in New Chwang about angels appearing unheralded.

It was a great thing to John Morning, this coming of General Lowenkampf. He had not dared to trust altogether in the high friend of Duke Fallows—nor even in finding such a friend in New Chwang. The actual fact meant that they would not be sent out of the zone of war, when the Russians evacuated from New Chwang, if Lowenkampf could help it; and who could help it if not the commander of the garrison? It meant, too, that everything Duke Fallows had said in his quiet and unadorned way when speaking of purely mundane affairs had turned out true.

Fallows sat up in his bunk to receive the embrace he knew was coming. The General was a small man. He must have been fifty. He appeared a tired father,—the father who puts his hands to his ears and looks terrified when his children approach, but who loves them with

secret fury and prays for them in their beds at night. He had suffered; he had a readiness to tears; he needed much brandy at this particular interval, as if his day had not begun well. He spoke of the battle of the Yalu and his tears were positive. It was a mistake, a hideous mistake. He said this in English, and with the frightened intensity of a woman whose lover has died misunderstanding her. . . . No, they were not to stay at New Chwang. . . . He would make them comfortable. . . . Yes, he had married a woman six years ago. . . . It murders the soldier in a man to marry a woman and find her like other women. You may think on the mystery of childbirth a whole life—but when your own woman, in your own house, brings you a child, it is all different. A thing to be awed at. . . . It draws the soldier-pith out of one's spine, as you draw the nerve out of a tooth. . . . You are never the same afterward.

Fallows sank back smiling raptly.

“You're the same old nervous prince of realizers—Lowenkampf—always realizing your own affairs with unprecedented realism. God knows, I'm glad to see you. . . . John Morning, here is a man who can tell you a thing you have heard before, in a way that you'll never forget. It's because he only talks about what he has realized for himself. His name is blown in the fabric of all he says. . . . Lowenkampf, here's a *boy*. I've been looking for him, years—ever since I found my own failure inevitable. John Morning—Lowenkampf, the General. If you both live to get back to your babies—Morning's are still in the sky, their dawn is not yet—you will remember this day—for it is a significant Trinity. . . . General, how many babies have you?”

“Oh, my God—one!”

Fallows seemed unspeakably pleased with that excited remark. Lowenkampf glanced at the shut eyes of his old friend, and then out of the window to the sordid

Chinese street, where the Russian soldiers moved to and fro in the unwieldy disquiet of a stage mob in its first formation.

“But they’re all my babies——”

John Morning had a vision of a battle with that sentence. All the rest of the day he thrilled with it. Work was so pure in his heart from the vision, that he left his machine that night (Duke Fallows seemed asleep) and touched the brow of his friend. . . .

## 7

**A**UGUST—Liaoyang, the enemy closing in. . . . There were times when John Morning doubted if he had ever been away from the sick man, Duke Fallows, and the crowds of Russian soldiery. Individually the days were long. Often in mid-afternoon, he stopped to think if some voice or picture of to-day’s dawning did not belong to yesterday or last week. Yet routine settled upon all that was past, and the days accumulated into a quantity of weeks that grew like the continual miracle of a hard man’s savings.

Always he missed something. He was hard in health, but felt white nowhere, in nor out, so much had he been played upon by sun and wind and dust. The Russian officers were continually asking him to try new horses—the roughest of the untamed purchases brought in by the Chinese. It had become quite the custom among the officers to advise with Morning on matters of horse-flesh. Fallows had started it by telling Lowenkampf that Morning formerly rode the jumpers in England, but the younger man had since earned his reputation in the Russian post.

A sorrel mare had appeared in the city. Rat-tailed and Roman-nosed she was, and covered with wounds. They had tried to ride her in from the Hun. Her skin

was like satin and she had not been saddled decently. Just a wild, head-strong young mare in the beginning, but bad handling had made her a mankiller. Lieutenant Luban, soft with vodka and cigarettes, had dickered for the mare, and drunkenly insisted upon mounting at once. Morning caught the bridle after the first fight, and Luban slid off in his arms in a state of collapse. Clearly an adult devil lived in the sorrel. She was red-eyed in her rage, past pain, and walked like a man. She would have gone over backwards with Luban, and yet she was lovely to Morning's eye, perfect as a yellow rose. He knew her sort—the kind that runs to courage and not to hair; the kind of individual that rarely breeds.

He led her apart, talked to her; knew that she only cared to kill him and be free. She was outrage; hate was the breath of her nostrils; but she made Morning forget his work. . . . Thirty officers were gathered in the compound. Morning had saddled her afresh; her back was easier—yet she was up, striking, pawing. He knew she meant to go back. Stirrup-free, he held her around the neck as she stood poised. His weight was against her toppling, but sheer deviltry hurled back her head, breaking the balance. They saw him push the hot yellow neck from him as she fell. He landed on his feet, facing her from the side, leaped clear—and then darted forward, catching the bridle-rein before she straightened her first front leg. Morning was in the saddle before she was up. Then the whole thing was done over again as perfectly as one with his hand in repeats a remarkable billiard-shot.

"It's only a question of time—she'll kill you," said Fallows.

"How she hates the Chinese, but she's the gamest thing in Asia," Morning answered. "I'd like to be away alone with her."

"You'd need a new continent for a romance like that," Fallows said, and that night, in their room of

Lowenkampf's headquarters, he resumed the subject, his eyes lost in the dun ceiling.

"There's only one name for that sorrel mare, if I'm consulted."

"Name her," Morning said.

"The one I'm thinking of—her name is Eve."

Fallows shivered, and turned the subject, but Morning knew he would come back. . . . They heard the sentries on the stone flags below. It was monotonous as the sound of the river. An east wind had blown all afternoon. Dust was gritty in the blankets, sore in the rifts of lip and nostril caused by the long baking wind. Their eyes felt old in the dry heat. Daily the trains had brought more Russians; daily more Chinese refugees slipped out behind. Liaoyang was a mass of soldiery—heavy and weary with soldiers—dull with its single thought of defense. For fifty or more miles, the southern arc of the circle about the old walled city was a system of defense—chains of Russian redouts, complicated entanglements, hill emplacements and rifle-pits. Beyond this the Japanese gathered openly and prepared. It seemed as if the earth itself would scream from the break in the tension when firing began. . . .

"John—a man must be alone——" Fallows said abruptly.

"That's one of the first things you told me—and that a man mustn't lie to himself."

"It must be thinking about your romance with that sorrel fiend—that brings her so close to-night, I mean the real Eve. I had to put the ocean between us—and yet she comes. Listen, John, when you are dull and tired after a hard day, you take a drink or two of brandy. You, especially you, are new and lifted again. That's what happens to me when a woman comes into the room. . . ."

Twice before Morning had been on the verge of this, and something spoiled it. He listened now, for Fallows

opened his heart. His eyes held unblinkingly the dim shadows of the ceiling. The step of the sentries sank into the big militant silence—and this was revelation:

“God, how generous women are with their treasures! They are devils because of their great-heartedness. So swift, so eager, so delicate in their giving. They look up at you, and you are lost. My life has been gathering a bouquet—and some flowers fade in your hand. . . . I hated it, but they looked up so wistfully—and it seemed as if I were rending in a vacuum. . . . Always the moment of illusion—that *this* one is the last, that here is completion, that peace will come with *this* fragrance; always their giving is different and very beautiful—and always the man is deeper in hell for their bestowal. . . . A day or a month—man’s incandescence is gone. Brown eyes, blue eyes—face pale or ruddy—lips passionate or pure—their giving momentary or immortal—and yet, I could not stay. Always they were hurt—less among men, less among their sisters, and no strangers to suffering—and always hell accumulated upon my head. . . . Then she came. There’s a match in the world for every man. Her name is Eve. She is the answer of her sisterhood to such as I.

“She was made so. She will not have me near. And yet with all her passion and mystery she is calling to me. The rolling Pacific isn’t broad enough. She has bound me by all that I have given to others, by all that I have denied others. She was made to match me, and came to her task full-powered, as the sorrel mare came to corral to-day for you. . . . Oh, yes, I honor her.”

There was silence which John Morning could not break. Fallows began to talk of death—in terms which the other remembered.

“. . . For the death of the body makes no difference. In the body here we build our heaven or hell. If we have loved possessions of the earth—we are weighted with them afterward,—imprisoned among

them. If we love flesh here, we are held like shadows to fleshly men and women, enmeshed in our own prevailing desire. If our life has been one of giving to others, of high and holy things—we are at the moment of the body's death, like powerful and splendid birds suddenly hearing the mystic call of the South. Death, it is the great cleansing flight into the South. . . .”

This from the sick man, was new as the first rustle of Spring to John Morning; yet within, he seemed long to have been expectant. There was thrill in the spectacle of the other who had learned by losing. . . .

Morning's mind was like the beleaguered city—desperate with waiting and potential disorder, outwardly arrogant, afraid in secret. . . . Duke Fallows was thinking of a woman, as he visioned his lost paradise. The younger man left the lamp-light to go to him, and heard as he leaned over the cot:

“. . . Like a lost traveler to the single point of light, John, I shall go to her. Eve—the one red light—I will glow red in the desire of her. She is my creation. Out of the desire of my strength she was created. As they have mastered me in the flesh, this creation of mine shall master me afterward—with red perpetual mastery.”

Lowenkampf came in. They saw by his eyes that he was more than ever drawn, in the tension and heart-hunger. He always brought his intimacies to the Americans. A letter had reached him from Europe in the morning, but the army had given him no time to think until now. It was not the letter, but something in it, that reminded him of a story. So he brought his brandy and the memory:

“. . . It was two or three evenings before I left Petersburg to come here. I had followed him about—my little son who is five years. I had followed him about the house all day. Every little while at some door, or through some curtain—I would see the mother smiling at us. It was new to me—for I had been seldom home



in the day-time—this playing with one's little son through the long day. But God, I knew I was no longer a soldier. I think the little mother knew. She is braver than I. She was the soldier—for not a tear did I see all that day. . . . And that night I lay down with my little son to talk until he fell asleep. It was dark in the room, but light was in the hall-way and the door open. . . . You see, he is just five—and very pure and fresh.”

Fallows sat up. He was startling in the shadow.

“. . . For a long time my little man stirred and talked—of riding horses, when his legs were a little longer, and of many things to do. He would be a soldier, of course. God pity the little thought. We would ride together soon—not in front of my saddle, but on a pony of his own—one that would keep up. I was to take him out to swim . . . and we would walk in the country to see the trees and animals. . . . My heart ached for love of him—and I, the soldier, wished there were no Asia in this world, no Asia, nor any war or torment. . . . He had seen a gray pony which he liked, because it had put its head down, as if to listen. It didn't wear any straps nor saddle, but came close, as one knowing a friend, and put its head down—thus the child was speaking to me.

“And I heard her step in the hall—the light, quick step. Her figure came into the light of the door-way. She looked intently through the shadows where we lay, her eyelids lifted, and a smile on her lips. Our little son saw her and this is what he said so drowsily:

“‘We are talking about what we will do—when we get to be men.’”

Fallows broke this silence:

“‘When we get to be men.’ Thank you, General. That was good for me. . . . Our friend John needed that little white cloud, too. I've just been leading him among the wilted primroses.’”

Morning did not speak.

Lowenkampf said the fighting would begin around the outer position to-morrow. . . . But that had been said before.

## 8

ON the night of August 31st, for all the planning, the progress of the battle was not to the Russian liking. All that day the movements of the Russians had mystified John Morning. The broad bend of the river to the east of the city had been crowded with troops—seemingly an aimless change of pastures. He felt that after all his study of the terrain and its possibilities, the big thing was getting away from him. When he mentioned this ugly fear to Fallows, the answer was:

“And that’s just what the old man feels.”

Fallows referred to Kuropatkin.

The monster spectacle had blinded Morning. He had to hold hard at times to keep his rage from finding words in answer to Duke Fallows’ scorn for the big waiting-panorama which had enthralled him utterly—the fleeing refugees, singing infantry, the big gun postures, the fluent cavalry back along the railroad, the armored hills, the whole marvelous atmosphere. . . . None of this appeared to matter to Fallows. He had written little or nothing. God knew why he had come. He would do a story, of course. . . . Morning had written a book—the climax of which would be the battle. He had staked all on the majesty of the story. His career would be constructed upon it. He would detach himself from all this and appear suddenly in America—the one man in America who knew Liaoyang. He would be Liaoyang; his mind the whole picture. He knew the wall, the Chinese names of the streets, the city and its tenderloin, where the Cantonese women were held in hideous bondage. He knew the hills and the river—the rapid treach-

ery of the Taitse. He had watched the trains come in from Europe with food, horses, guns and men; had even learned much Russian and some Chinese. He had studied Lowenkampf, Bilderling, Zarubaieff, Mergenthaler; had looked into the eyes of Kuropatkin himself. . . .

Duke Fallows said:

“All this is but one idea, John—one dirty little idea multiplied. Don't let a couple of hundred thousand soldiers spoil the fact in your mind. Lowenkampf personally isn't capable of fighting for himself on such a rotten basis. Fighting with a stranger on a neighbor's property—that's the situation. Russia says to Old Man China, 'Go, take a little airing among your hills. A certain enemy of mine is on the way here, and I want to kill him from your house. It will be a dirty job, but it is important to me that he be killed just so. I'll clean up the door-step afterward, repair all damages, and live in your house myself. . . . And the Japanese have trampled the flowers and vegetable-beds of the poor old Widow Korea to get here——'”

Thus the Californian took the substance out of the hundred thousand words Morning had written in the past few months. Dozens of small articles had been sent out until a fortnight ago through Lowenkampf, via Shanghai, but the main fiber of each was kept for this great story, which he meant to sell in one piece in America.

*Kuropatkin*—both Morning and Fallows saw him as the mighty beam in the world's eye at this hour. To Morning he was the risen master of events; to Fallows merely a figure tossed up from the moil. Morning saw him as the source of power to the weak, as a silencer of the disputatious and the envious, as the holding selvage to the vast Russian garment, worn, stained and ready to ravel, the one structure of hope in a field of infinite failures. Fallows saw him as an integral part of all this

disorder and disruption, one whose vision was marvelous only in the detection of excuses for himself in the action of others; whose sorrow was a pose and whose *self* was far too imperious for him firmly to grip the throat of a large and vital obstacle. What Morning called the mystical somberness of the chief, Fallows called the sullen silence of dim comprehension. Somewhere between these notations the Commander stood. . . . They had seen him at dusk that day. "He seems to be repressing himself by violent effort," the younger man whispered.

"What would you say he were repressing, John—his appetite?"

The answer was silence, and late that night, (the Russian force was now tense and compact as a set spring), Fallows dropped down upon his cot, saying:

"You think I'm a scoffer, don't you?"

"You break a man's point, that's all——"

"I know—but we're not to be together always. . . . Listen, don't think me a scoffer, even now. These big, bulky things won't hold you forever. Perhaps, if I were a bigger man, I'd keep silent. You'll write them well, no doubt about that. . . . But don't get into the habit of thinking me a scoffer. There's such a lot of finer things to fall for. John, I wasn't a scoffer when I first read your stuff—and saw big forces moving around you. . . . A man who knows a little about women, knows a whole lot about men. . . . To be a famous soldier, John, a man can't have any such forces moving around him. He must be an empty back-ground. All his strength is the compound of meat and eggs and fish; his strength goes to girth and jowl and fist——"

"You're a wonderful friend to me, Duke."

"That's just what I didn't want you to say. . . . There's no excellence on my part. Like a good book, I couldn't riddle you in one reading."

Morning found himself again, as he wrote on that last night of preparation; that last night of summer. It

was always the way, when the work came well. It brought him liveableness with himself and kindness for others. He had his own precious point of view again, too. He pictured Kuropatkin . . . sitting at his desk, harried by his sovereign, tormented by princes, seeing as no other could see the weaknesses in the Russian displays of power, and knowing the Japanese better than any other; the man who had come up from Plevna fighting, who had written his fightings, who was first to say, "We are not ready," and first to gather up the unpreparedness for battle.

Morning felt himself the reporter of the Fates for this great carnage. He wanted to see the fighting, to miss no phase of it—to know the mechanics, the results, the speed, the power, weakness and every rending of this great force. He did not want the morals of it, the evil spirit behind, but the brute material action. He wanted the literary Kuropatkin, not a possible reality. He wanted the one hundred thousand words driven by the one-seeing, master-seeing reporter's instinct. He was Russian in hope and aspiration—but absolutely negative in what was to take place. He wanted the illusion of the service; he saw the illusion more clearly; so could the public. The illusion bore out every line of his work so far. To laugh at the essence of the game destroyed its meaning, and the huge effect he planned to make in America.

Morning was sorry now for having lost during the day the sense of fine relation with Fallows, but everything he had found admirable—from toys and sweets to wars and women—the sick man had found futile and betraying; everything that his own mind found good was waylaid and diminished by the other. Fallows, in making light of the dramatic suspense of the city, had struck at the very roots of his ambition. The work of the night had healed this all, however.

The last night of summer—joyously he ended the big picture. Three themes ran through entire—Nodzu's artillery, under which the Russians were willingly dislodging from the shoulders and slopes of Pensu-marong; the tread of the Russian sentries below, (a real bit of Russian bass in the Liaoyang symphony), and the glissando of the rain.

He sat back from his machine at last. There were two hundred and seventy sheets altogether of thin tough parchment-copy—400 words to the page, and the whole could be folded into an inside pocket. It was ready for the battle itself. . . . All the Morning moods were in the work—moments of photographic description, of philosophic calm, instant reversals to glowing idealism—then the thrall of the spectacle—finally, a touch, just a touch to add age, of Fallows' scorn. It was newspaper stuff—what was wanted. He had brought his whole instrument up to concert-pitch to-night. The story was ready for the bloody artist.

His heart softened emotionally toward Fallows lying on his back over in the shadows. . . . Lowenkampf came in for a queer melting moment. . . . Morning looked affectionately at his little traveling type-mill. It had never faltered—a hasty, cheap, last-minute purchase in America, but it had seen him through. It was like a horse one picks up afield, wears out and never takes home, but thinks of many times in the years afterward. Good little beast. . . . And this made him think with a thrill of Eve, brooding in the dark below. . . . She was adjusted to a thought in his mind that had to do with the end of the battle. It was a big-bored, furious idea. Morning glanced at his watch. Two-fifteen on the morning of September. He unlaced one shoe, but the idea intervened again and he moved off in the stirring dream of it. It was three o'clock when he bent to the other shoe.

ALL the next day, Liaoyang was shelled from the south and southeast; all day Eve shivered and sweated in the smoky turmoil. At dusk, Morning, to whom the mare was far too precious to be worn out in halter, rode back to Yentai along the railroad. She operated like a perfect toy over that twelve miles of beaten turf. The rain ceased for an hour or two, and the dark warmth of the night seemed to poise her every spring. The man was electric from her. At the station Morning learned that Lowenkampf, with thirteen battalions, already had occupied the lofty coal-fields, ten miles to the east on a stub of the railroad. He had first supposed the force of Siberians now crowding the station to be Lowenkampf's men; instead it was his reserve. Eve had lathered richly, so that an hour passed before she was cool enough for grain or water. He rubbed her down, meanwhile, talked to her softly and made plans. Her eye flashed red at the candle, as he shut the door of the stable. That night on foot he did the ten miles to the collieries, joining Fallows and the General at midnight. . . . Morning was struck with the look of Lowenkampf's face. He wasn't taking a drink that night; his mouth was old and white. A thin bar of palor stretched obliquely from chin to cheek-bone. The chin trembled, too; the eyes were hungerful, yet so kind. Desperate incongruity somewhere. This man should have been back in Europe with his neighbors about the fire—his comrade tucked in up-stairs, the little mother pouring tea. And yet, Lowenkampf—effaced with his anguish and dreamy-eyed, as if surveying the distance between his heaven and hell—was the brain of the sledge that was to break the Flanker's back-bone to-morrow.

"The Taitse is only ten miles south," said Fallows, as they turned in. "Bilderling is there. Kuroki is supposed to poke his nose in between, and Lowenkampf is to

smash it against Bilderling. Mergenthaler's Cossacks are here to take the van in the morning, and we're backed up by a big body of Siberians, stretching behind to Yentai station——"

"I saw 'em," said Morning. "Lowenkampf looks sick with strain."

Day appeared, with just the faintest touch of red showing like a broken bit of glass. Rain-clouds, bursting-heavy, immediately rolled over it,—a deluge of grays, leisurely stirring with whitish and watery spots. Though his troops were taking the field, Lowenkampf had not left his quarters in the big freight *go-down*. Commanders hurried in and out. Fallows was filling two canteens with diluted tea, when an old man entered, weeping. It was Colonel Ritz, bent, red-eyed, nearly seventy, who had been ordered, on account of age and decrepitude, to remain with the staff. Brokenly, he begged for his command.

"I have always stayed with the line, General. I shall be quick as another. Don't keep an old man, who has always stuck to the line—don't keep one like that back in time of battle."

Lowenkampf smiled and embraced him—sending him out with his regiment.

Mergenthaler now came in. There was something icy and hateful about this Roman-faced giant. His countenance was like a bronze shield—so small the black eyes, and so wide and high the cheek-bones. For months his Cossacks had done sensational work—small fighting, far scouting, desperate service. He despised Lowenkampf; believed he had earned the right to be the hammer today; and, in truth, he had, but Lowenkampf, who ranked him, had been chosen. Bleak and repulsive with rage, the Cossack chief made no effort to repress himself. Lowenkampf was reminded that he had been policing the streets of Liaoyang for weeks, that his outfit was "fat-



heeled and duck-livered." . . . More was said before Mergenthaler stamped out, his jaw set like a stone balcony. It seemed as if he tore from the heart of Lowenkampf the remnant of its stamina. . . . For a moment the three were alone in the head-quarters. Fallows caught the General by the shoulders and looked down in his face:

"Little Father—you're the finest and most courageous of them all. . . . It will be known and proven—what I say, old friend—'when we get to be men.'"

The masses of Lowenkampf's infantry, forming on the heights among the coal-fields, melted at the outer edges and slid downward. Willingly the men went. They did not know that this was the day. They had been fearfully expectant of battle at first—ever since Lake Baikal was crossed. Battalion after battalion slid off the heights, and were lost in the queer lanes running through the rocks and low timber below. The general movement was silent. The rain held off; the air was close and warm. Lowenkampf, unvaryingly attentive to the two Americans, put them in charge of Lieutenant Luban, the young staff officer, whom Morning had caught in his arms from the back of the sorrel. Down the ledges they went, as the others.

Morning was uneasy, as one who feels he has forgotten something—a tugging in his mind to go back. He was strongly convinced that Lowenkampf was unsubstantial in a military way. He could not overcome the personal element of this dread—as if the General were of his house, and he knew better than another that he was ill-prepared for the day's trial.

Fallows welcomed any disaster. As he had scorned the army in its waiting, he scorned it now in its strike. He looked very lean and long. The knees were in corduroy and unstable, but his nerve could not have been steadier had he been called to a tea-party by Kuroki. As one who had long since put these things behind him,

Fallows appeared; indeed, as one sportively called out by the younger set, to whom severing the spine of a flanker was fresh and engrossing business. . . . Morning choked with suppressions. Luban talked low and wide. He was in a funk. Both saw it. Neither would have objected, except that he monopolized their thoughts with his broken English, and to no effect.

Now they went into the *kao liang*—vast, quiet, enfolding. It held the heat stale from yesterday. The seasonal rains had filled the spongy loam at the roots, with much to spare blackening the lower stems. . . . For an hour and a half they sunk into the several paths and lost themselves, Lowenkampf's untried battalions. The armies of the world might have vanished so, only to be seen by the birds, moving like vermin in a hide. . . . Men began to think of food and drink. The heights of Yentai, which they had left in bitter hatred so shortly ago, was now like hills of rest on the long road home. More and more the resistance of men shrunk in the evil magic of this pressure of grain and sky and holding earth—a curious, implacable unworldliness it was, that made the flesh cry out.

"They should have cut this grain," Luban said for the third time.

Fallows had said it first. Anyone should have seen the ruin of this advance, unless the end of the millet were reached before the beginning of battle. They had to recall with effort at last, that there was an outer world of cities and seas and plains—anything but this hollow country of silence and fatness.

If you have ever jumped at the sudden drumming of a pneumatic hammer, as it rivets a bolt against the steel, you have a suggestion of the nervous shock from that first far machine-gun of Kuroki's—just a suggestion, because Lowenkampf's soldiers at the moment were suffocating in *kao liang*. . . . In such a strange and expensive way, they cut the crops that day.

Morning trod on the tail of the battalion ahead. It had stopped; he had not. The soldier in front whom he bumped turned slowly around and looked into his face. The wide, glassy blue eyes then turned to Fallows, and after resting a curious interval, finally found Luban.

The face was broad and white as lard. Whatever else was in it, there was no denying the fear, the hate, the cunning—all of a rudimentary kind. Luban was held by the man's gaze. The fright in both hearts sparked in contact. The stupid face of the soldier suddenly reflected the terror of the officer. And this was the result: The wide-staring suddenly altered to a squint; the vacant, helpless staring of a bewildered child turned into the bright activity of a trapped rodent.

Luban had failed in his great instant. His jaw was loose-hinged, his mouth leaked saliva.

Now Morning and Fallows saw other faces—twenty faces in the grain, faces searching for the nearest officer. Their eyes roved to Luban; necks craned among the fox-tails. There was a slow giving of the line, and bumping contacts from ahead like a string of cars. . . . Morning recalled the look of Luban, as he had helped him down from the sorrel. He had helped then; he hated now. Fallows was better. He plumped the boy on the shoulder and said laughingly:

“Talk to 'em. Get 'em in hand—quick, Luban—or they'll be off!”

It was all in ten seconds. The nearest soldiers had seen Luban fail. Other platoons, doubtless many, formed in similar tableaux to the same end. A second machine-gun took up the story. It was far-off, and slightly to the left of the Russian line of advance. The incomprehensible energy of the thing weakened the Russian column, although it drew no blood.

A roar ahead from an unseen battalion-officer—the Russian *Forward*. Luban tried to repeat it, but pitifully.

A great beast rising from the ooze and settling back *against* the voice—such was the answer.

The Thought formed. It was the thought of the day. None was too stupid to catch the spirit of it. Certain it was, and pervading as the grain. Indeed, it was conceived of *kao liang*. The drum of the machine-gun, like a file in a tooth, was but its quickener. It flourished under the ghostly grays and whites of the sky. In the forward battalions the Thought already clothed itself in action:

To run back—to follow the paths back through the grain—to reach the decent heights again. And this was but a miniature of the thought that mastered the whole Russian army in Asia—to go back—to rise from the ghastly hollows of Asia and turn homeward again.

It leaped like a demon upon the unset volition of the mass. Full-formed, it arose from the lull. It effected the perfect turning.

Morning saw it, and wanted the source. He had planned too long to be denied now. The rout was big to handle, but he wanted *the front*—a glimpse of the actual inimical line. It was not enough for him to watch the fright and havoc streaming back. Calling a cheery *adieu* to Fallows, he bowed against the current—alone obeying the Russian *Forward*.

## IO

**A**T the edge of the trampled lane, often shunted off into the standing crop, Morning made his way, running when he could. . . . The pictures were infinite; a lifetime of pictures; hundreds of faces and each a picture. Men passed him, heads bowed, arms about their faces, like figures in the old Dore paintings, running from the wrath of the Lord. Here and there was

pale defiance. Nine sheepish soldiers carried a single wounded man, the much-handled fallen one looking silly as the rest.

The utter ghostliness of it all was in Morning's mind. . . . Gasping for breath, after many minutes of running, he sank down to rest. Soldiers sought to pick him up and carry him back. There were others who could not live with themselves after the first panic. They fell out of the retreat to join him. Others stopped to fire—a random emptying of magazines in the millet. Certain groups huddled when they saw him—mistaking a civilian for an officer—and covered their faces. Officers begged, prayed for the men to hold, but the torrent increased, individuals diving into the thick of the grain and leaking around behind. White showed beneath the beards, and white lips moved in prayer. The locked bayonets of the Russians had never seemed so dreadful as when low-held in the grain. . . . One beardless boy strode back jauntily, his lips puckered in a whistle.

The marvelous complexity of common men—this was the sum of all pictures, and the great realization of John Morning. His soul saw much that his eyes failed. The day was a marvelous cabinet of gifts—secret chambers to be opened in after years.

Now he was running low, having entered the zone of fire. He heard the steel in the grain; stems were snapped by invisible fingers; foxtails lopped. He saw the slow leaning of stems half-cut. . . . Among the fallen, on a rising slope, men were crawling back; and here and there, bodies had been cast off, the cloth-covered husks of poor driven peasants. They had gone back to the soil, these bodies, never really belonging to the soldiery. It was only when they writhed that John Morning forgot himself and his work. The art of the dead was consummate.

The grain thinned. He had come to the end of Lowenkampf's infantry. It had taken an hour and a half

for the command to enter in order; less than a half-hour to dissipate. The rout had been like a cloud-burst.

And this was the battle. (Morning had to hold fast to the thought.) Long had he waited for this hour; months he had constructed the army in his story for this hour of demolition. It was enough to know that Lowenkampf had failed. Liaoyang, the battle, was lost. . . . Old Ritz went by weeping—he had been too old, they said; they had not wanted him to take his regiment to field. Yet he was perhaps the last to leave the field. Only his dead remained, and Colonel Ritz was not weeping for them. . . .

Now Morning saw it was *not* all over. Before gaining the ridge swept by Kuroki's fire, he knew that Mergenthaler was still fighting. It came to him with the earthy rumble of cavalry. To the left, in a crevasse under the crest of the ridge, he saw a knot of horses with empty saddles, and a group of men. Closer to them he crawled, along the sheltered side of the ridge, until in the midst of Russian officers, he saw that splendid bruising brute, who had stamped out of headquarters that morning, draining the heart of Lowenkampf as he went. Mergenthaler of the Cossacks—designed merely to be the eyes and fingers of the fighting force; yet unsupported, unbodied as it were, he still held the ridge.

Kuroki, as yet innocent of the rout, would not otherwise have been checked. His ponderous infantry was not the sort to be stopped by these light harriers of the Russian army. The Flanker was watching for the Hammer, and the Hammer already had been shattered. . . . Mergenthaler, cursing, handled his cavalry squadrons to their death, lightly and perfectly as coins in his palm. Every moment that he stayed the Japanese, he knew well that he was holding up to the quick scorn of the world the foot-soldiers of Lowenkampf, whom he hated. His head was lifted above the rocks to watch the field. His couriers came and went, slipping up and down

through the thicker timber, still farther to the left. . . . Morning crawled up nearby until he saw the field—and now action, more abandoned than he had ever dared to dream:

An uncultivated valley strewn with rocks and low timber. Three columns of Japanese infantry pouring down from the opposite parallel ridge, all smoky with the hideous force of the reserve—machine-guns, and a mile of rifles stretching around to the right. (It was this wing's firing that had started the havoc in the grain.)

Three columns of infantry pouring down into the ancient valley, under the gray stirring sky—brown columns, very even and unshaking—and below, the Cossacks.

Morning lived in the past ages. He lay between two rocks watching, having no active sense—but pure receptivity. Time was thrust back. . . . Three brown dragons crawling down the slopes in the gray day—knights upon horses formed to slay the dragons.

Out of the sheltering rocks and timber they rode—and chose the central dragon quite in the classic way. It turned to meet the knights upon horses—head lifted, neck swollen like the nuchal ribs of the cobra. In the act of striking it was ridden down, but the knights were falling upon the smashed head. The mated dragons had attacked from either side. . . .

It was a fragment, a moving upon the ground,—that company of knights upon horses,—and the Voice of it, all but deadened by the rifles, came up spent and pitiful.

Mergenthaler's thin, high voice was not hushed. He knew how to detach another outfit from the rocks and timber-thickets, already found by the Japanese on the ridge, already deluged with fire. Out from the betraying shelter, the second charge, a new child of disaster, ran forth to strike Kuroki's left. . . . Parts of the film were elided. The cavalymen fell away by a terrible magic. Again the point thickened and drew back, met

the charge; again the welter and the thrilling back-sweep of the Russian fragment.

Morning missed something. His soul was listening for something. . . . It was comment from Duke Fallows, so long marking time to events. . . . He laughed. He was glad to be free, yet his whole inner life drew back in loathing from Mengenthaler—as if to rush to his old companion. . . . And Mergenthaler turned—the brown high-boned cheeks hung with a smile of derision. He was climbing far and high on Lowenkampf's shame. . . . He gained the saddle—this hard, huge Egoist, the staff clinging to him, and over the ridge they went to set more traps.

The wide, rocking shoulders of the General sank into the timber—as he trotted with his aides down the death-ridden valley. It may have been the sight of this little party that started a particular machine-gun on the Japanese right. . . . The sizable bay the chief rode looked like a polo-pony under the mighty frame. Morning did not see him fall: only the plunging bay with an empty saddle; and then when the timber opened a little, the staff carrying the leader up the trail.

It was the mystery which delayed the Japanese, not Mergenthaler. When at last Kuroki's left wing continued to report no aggressive movement from Bilderling river-ward; and when continued combing in the north raised nothing but bleak hills and grain-valleys hushed between showers, he flooded further columns down the ridge, and slew what he could of the Russian horsemen who tried with absurd heroism to block his way. At two in the afternoon the Flanker fixed his base among the very rocks where Morning had lain—and the next position for him to take was the coal-hills of Yentai. Only the ghosts of the cavalry stood between—and *kao liang*.

Morning turned back a last time to the fields of millet in the early dusk. He had been waiting for Mergenthaler to die. The General lay in the very *go-down*



where he had outraged Lowenkampf that morning; and now the Japanese were driving the Russians from the position. . . . Mergenthaler would not die. They carried him to a coal-car, and soldiers pushed it on to Yentai, the station.

The Japanese were closing in. They were already in the northern heights contending with Stakelberg; they were stretched out bluffing Bilderling to the southward. They were locked with Zarubaieff at the southern front of Liaoyang. They were in the grain. . . . Cold and soulless Morning felt, as one who has failed in a great temptation; as one who has lived to lose, and has not been spared the picture of his own eternal failure.

He looked back a last time at the grain in the closing night. The Japanese were there, brown men, native to the grain. The great shadowed field had whipped Lowenkampf and lost the battle. It lay in the dusk like a woman, trampled, violated, feebly waving. Rain-clouds came with darkness to cover the nakedness and bleeding.

## II

**D**UKE Fallows saw but one face. . . . John Morning studied a thousand, mastered the heroism of the Cossacks, filled his brain with blood-pictures and the incorrigible mystery of common men. Duke Fallows saw but one face. In the beauty and purity of its inspiration, he read a vile secret out of the past. To the very apocalypse of this secret, he read and understood. The shame of it blackened the heavens for his eyes, but out of its night and torment came a Voice uttering the hope of the human spirit for coming days.

Morning had left. Luban had put on bluster and roaring. Their place in the grain was now broad from trampling; the flight was on in full. It meant something to Fallows. It was not that he wanted the Japanese to win the battle; the doings of the Japanese were of little

concern to him. He felt curiously that the Japanese were spiritually estranged from the white man. Russia was different; he was close to the heart of the real Russia whose battle was at home. Russia's purpose in Asia was black; he was full of scorn for the purpose, but full of love for the troops. Strange gladness was upon him—as the men broke away. Reality at home would come from this disaster. He constructed the world's battle from it, and sang his song.

One soldier running haltingly for his life looked up to the face of Luban of the roaring voice—and laughed. Luban turned, and perceived that Fallows had not missed the laugh of the soldier. This incident, now closed, was in a way responsible for the next.

. . . Out of the grain came striding a tall soldier of the ranks. His beard was black, his eyes very blue. In his eyes was a certain fire that kindled the nature of Duke Fallows as it had never been kindled before, not even by the most feminine yielding. The man's broad shoulders were thrust back; his face clean of cowardice, clean as the grain and as open to the sky. His head was erect and bare; he carried no gun, scorned the pretense of looking for wounded. Had he carried a dinner-pail, the picture would have been as complete—a good man going home from a full-testing day.

In that moment Fallows saw more than from the whole line before. . . . Here was a conscript. He had been taken from his house, forced across Europe and Asia to this hour. The reverse of his persecutors had set him free. This freedom was the fire in his eyes. . . . They had torn him from his house; they had driven and brutalized him for months. And now they had come to dreadful disaster. It was such a disaster as a plain man might have prayed for. He *had* prayed for it in the beginning, but in the long, slow gatherings for battle, in the terrible displays of power, he had lost his faith to pray. Yet the plain man's God had an-

swered that early prayer. This was the brightness of the burning in the blue eyes.

His persecutors had been shamed and undone. He had seen his companions dissipate, his sergeants run; seen his captains fail to hold. The great force that had tortured him, that had seemed *the world* in strength, was now broken before his eyes. Its mighty muscles were writhing, their strength running down. The love of God was splendid in the ranker's heart; the breath of home had come. The turning in the grain—was a turning homeward.

All this Fallows saw. It was illumination to him—the hour of his great reception.

Luban, just insulted by the other infantryman, now faced the big, blithe presence, emerging unhurried from the grain. Luban raised his voice:

“And what are *you* sneaking back for?”

“I am not sneaking——”

“Rotten soldier stuff—you should be shot down.”

“I am not a soldier—I am a ploughman.”

“You are here to fight——”

“They forced me to come——”

“Forced you to fight for your Fatherland?”

“This is not my Fatherland, but a strange country——”

“You are here for the Fatherland——”

“I have six children in Russia. The Fatherland is not feeding them. My field is not ploughed.”

The talk had crackled; it had required but a few seconds; Luban had done it all for Fallows to see and hear—but Fallows was very far from observing the pose of that weakling. The Ploughman held him heart and soul—as did the infallible and instantly unerring truth of his words. The world's poor, the world's degraded, had found its voice.

The man was white with truth, like a priest of Melchizedek.

Luban must have broken altogether. Fallows, listening, watching the Ploughman with his soul, did not turn. . . . Now the man's face changed. The lips parted strangely, the eyelids lifting. Whiteness wavered between the eyes of the Ploughman and the eyes of Duke Fallows. Luban's pistol crashed and the man fell with a sob.

Fallows was kneeling among the soaked roots of the millet, holding the soldier in his arms:

"Living God, to die for you—you, who are so straight and so young. . . . Hear me—don't go yet—I must have your name, Brother. . . . Luban did not know you—he is just a little sick man—he didn't know you or he wouldn't have done this. . . . Tell me your name . . . and the place of your babes, and their mother. . . . Oh, be sure they shall be fed—glad and proud am I to do that easy thing! . . . You have shown me the Nearer God. . . . They shall be fed, and they shall hear! The world, cities and nations, all who suffer, shall hear what the Ploughman said—the soul of the Ploughman, who is the hope of the world. . . . You have spoken for Russia. . . . And now rest—rest, Big Brother—you have done your work."

The soldier looked up to him. There had been pain and wrenching, the vision of a desolated house. Now, his eyes rested upon the American. The shadow of death lifted. He saw his brother in the eyes that held him—his brother, and it seemed, the Son of Man smiled there behind the tears. . . . He smiled back like a weary child. Peace came to him, lustrous from the shadow, for lo! his field was ploughed and children sang in his house.

Fallows had not risen from his knees. He was talking to himself:

". . . Out of the grain he came—the soul of the Ploughman. And gently he spoke to us . . . and

this is the day of the battle. I came to the battle—and I go to carry his message to the poor—to those who labor—to Russia and the America of the future. Luban spoke the thought of the world, but the Ploughman spoke for humanity risen. He spoke for the women, and for the poor. . . . Bright he came from the grain—bright and unafraid—and those shall hear him, who suffer and are heavy-laden. This is the battle! . . . And his voice came to me—a great and gracious voice—for tsars and kings and princes to hear—and I am to carry his message. . . .”

Luban laughed feebly at last, and Fallows looked up to him.

“You’ll hear him in your passing, Luban, poor lad. You’ll hear him in your hell. Until you are as simple and as pure as this Ploughman—you shall hear and see all this again. Though you should hang by the neck to-night, Luban,—this picture would go out with you. For this is the hour you killed your Christ.”

## 12

**L**OWENKAMPF was the name that meant defeat. Lowenkampf—it was like the rain that night. . . . “Lowenkampf started out too soon.” . . . Morning heard it. Fallows heard it. The coughing sentries heard it. The whole dismal swamp of drenched, whipped soldiery heard it. Sleek History had awakened to grasp it; Kuropatkin had washed his hands. . . . Lowenkampf had started out too soon that morning. The Siberians had only left Yentai Station proper when Lowenkampf set forth from the Coal-heights. Had his supports been in position (very quickly and clearly the world’s war-experts would see this) the rout in the grain would have been checked.

As it was, many of Lowenkampf’s soldiers had run the entire ten miles from the heights to the station, Yen-

tai—after emerging from *kao-liang*—evading the Siberian supports as they ran, as chaos flies from order. Now in the darkness (with Kuroki bivouacked upon the main trophy of the day, the Coal-heights) the shamed battalions of Lowenkampf re-formed along the main line in the midst of their unused reserves.

The day had been like a month of fever to Morning, but Duke Fallows was a younger man, and a stranger that night. . . . Morning tried to work, but he was too close to it all, too tired. It was as if he were trying to tell of a misfortune that had no beginning, and whose every phase was his own heart's concern. His weariness was like the beginning of death—coldness and pervading *ennui*. Against his will he was gathered in the glowing currents of Duke Fallows—watching, listening, not pretending even to understand, but borne along. Together they went in to the General's private room. Lowenkampf looked up, gathered himself with difficulty and smiled. Fallows turned to Morning, asked him to stand by the door, then strode forward and knelt by the General's knees. It did not seem extraordinary to Morning—so much was insane.

“You were chosen, old friend. It has been a big day for the under-dog——”

“I have lost Liaoyang.”

“That was written.”

“My little boy will hear it in the street. He will hear it in the school. Before he is a man—he will hear it.”

“I shall take him upon my knee. I shall tell him of you in a way that he shall never forget. And his mother—I shall tell her——”

Lowenkampf rubbed his eyes.

“I have business in Russia. This day I heard what must be done. It is almost as if I had gotten to be a man.”

Fallows leaned back laughingly, his arms extended, as if pushing the other's knees from him.

Some inner wall broke, and the General wept. Morning put his foot against the door. The thought in his heart was: "This is something I cannot write." . . .

Morning held the idea coldly now that Fallows was mentally softened from the strain. Other things came up to support it. . . . He, too, had seen a soldier shot by an officer. It was discipline. At best, it was but one of the thousand pictures. It had happened less because the man was retiring without a wound—thousands were doing that—than because the man answered back, when the officer spoke. He did not hear what the soldier said. This soldier possibly had trans-Baikal children, too. The day and his long illness had crazed Fallows, now at the knees of the man who had lost the battle.

". . . I know what you thought this morning—when you saw your men march down into the grain," Fallows was saying to the General. "You thought of your little boy and his mother. You thought of the babes and wives and mothers—of those soldiers of yours whom you were sending to the front. You didn't want to send them out. You're too close to becoming a man for that. You wondered if you would not have to suffer for sending them out so—and if this particular suffering would not have to do with *your* little boy and his mother——"

"My God, stop, Fallows——"

"You had to think that. You wouldn't be Lowenkampf if you failed to think that. . . . I love you for it, old friend. Big things will come from Lowenkampf, and from the conscript who came to me out of the grain with vision and a voice. The battle at home won't be so hard to win—now that this is lost."

There was a challenge and heavy steps on the platform—and one low, hurried voice.

Lowenkampf stood up and wiped his eyes.

"The Commander——" he whispered.

A pair of captains towered above him, a grizzled

colonel behind; then Morning saw the gray of the short beard, and the dark, dry-burning of unblinking eyes, fixed upon Lowenkampf. . . . The latter's shoulders drooped a little, and his eyes lowered deprecatingly for just an instant. Kuropatkin passed in. The soft fullness of his shoulders was like a woman's. Fleshly and failing, he looked, from behind. . . . The Americans waited outside with the colonel and captains. The door was shut.

Midnight. . . . Fallows and Morning had moved in the rain among the different commands. The army at Yentai seemed to be emerging from prolonged anæsthesia to find itself missing in part and strangely disordered. It was afraid to sleep, afraid to think of itself, and denied drink. Fallows had told everywhere the story of the Ploughman; just now he helped himself to a bundle of Morning's Chinese parchment, and was writing copy in long-hand.

His head was bowed, his eyes expressionless.

"And I alone remain to tell thee!" he muttered at last.

Morning did not answer, but resigned himself to hear more of the Messiah who came out of the grain.

"I told one of Mergenthaler's aides the story," Fallows said coldly. "He said it was quite the proper thing to do—to shoot down a man who was leaving the field unwounded. I told Manlewson of the First Siberians, who replied that the Russians would begin to win battles when they murdered all such, as unflinchingly and instantly as the Japanese did, and hospital malingerers as well. I told Bibinoff (who is Luban's captain), and he said: 'That's the first good thing I ever heard about Luban.' He was pleased and epigrammatic. . . ."

Fallows stood up—his face was in shadow, so far beneath was the odorous lamp.

"Living God—I can't make them see—I can't make them see! They're all enchanted. Or else I'm



dead and this is hell. . . . They talk about Country. They talk about making a man stand in a place of sure death for his Country—in this Twentieth Century—when war has lost its last vestige of meaning to the man in the ranks, and his Country is a thing of rottenness and moral desolation! What is the Country to the man in the ranks? A group of corrupt, inbred undermen who study to sate themselves—to tickle and soften themselves—with the property and blood and slavery of the poor. . . . A good man, a clean man, is torn from his house to fight, to stand in the fire-pits and die for such monsters. Suddenly the poor man sees!

“. . . He came forth from the grain with vision—smiling and unafraid. He is not afraid to fight, but he has found himself on the wrong side of the battle. When he fights again it will be for his child, for his house, for his brother, for his woman, for his soul. Blood in plenty has he for such a war. . . . Think of it, John Morning, the Empire was entrusted to poor little Luban—against this man of vision! He came forth smiling from the grain. *‘I do not belong here, my masters. I was torn away from my woman and children, and I must be home for the winter ploughing. It is a long way—and I must be off. I am a ploughman, not a soldier. I belong to my children and my field. My country does not plough my field—does not feed my children. . . .* What could Luban do but kill him—little agent of Herod? But the starry child lives! . . .

“And listen, John, to-night—you heard them—we heard these fat-necked, vulture-breasted commanders—vain, envy-poisoned, scandal-mongering commanders, complaining to each other: ‘See, what stuff has been given us to win battles with! . . . I have told it and they cannot see. They are not even good devils; they are not decent devourers. They have no humor—that is their deadly sin. An adult, half-human murderer, seeing his soldiers leave the field, would cry aloud, ‘Hello, you

Innocents—so you have wakened up at last! But these cannot see. Their eyes are stuck together. It is their deadly sin—the sin against the Holy Ghost—to lack humor to this extent!”

Morning laughed strangely. “Come on to bed, you old anarchist,” he said, though sleep was far from his own eyes.

“That’s it, John. Anarchy. In the name of Fatherland, Russia murders a hundred thousand workmen out here in Asia. In answer, a few men and women gather together in a Petersburg cellar, saying, ‘We are fools, not heroes. When we fight again it will be for *Our Country!*’ And they are anarchists—their cause is Terrorism!”

“We’re all shot to pieces to-night, Duke——”

“We are alive, John. Lowenkampf is alive. But he who spoke to me this day, who came forth so blithely to die in my arms (his woman sleeps ill to-night in the midst of her babes), and he is lying out in the rain, his face turned up to the rain. God damn the fat reptile that calls itself Fatherland! . . . But, I say to you, that we’re come nearly to the end of the prince and pauper business on this planet. The soul of the Ploughman was heard to-day—as long ago they heard the Soul of the Carpenter. . . . He is lying out there in the millet—his face turned up to the rain. Yet I say to you, John, there’s more life in him this hour than in his Tsar and all the princes of the blood.”

Fallows covered his face with his hands.

“You’re tired and thick to-night, John, but you are one who must see!” he finished passionately. “You must help me tell the story to the cellar gatherings in Petersburg, to the secret meetings in all the centers of misery, wherever a few are gathered together in the name of Brotherhood—in New York, London, Paris, and Berlin. . . . You must help me to make other men see—help me to tell this thing so that the world will hear it, and

with such power that the world will be unable longer to lie to itself.

"I can see it now—how Jesus, the Christ, tried to make men see. . . . That was His Gethsemane—that He could not make men see. I tell you it is a God's work—and it came to Jesus, the Christ, at last—'If they crucify me, perhaps, a few will see!' . . . I'm going over to Russia, John, to learn how to tell them better."

## 13

**T**HE night of the third of September, and John Morning is off for the big adventure. Between the hills, the roads are a-stream. . . . All day he had watched different phases of the retreat. Fighting back in the city; fighting here and there along the staggering, burdened, cruelly-punished line; a sudden breaking-out of fighting in a dozen places like hidden fires; rain and wounded and seas of mud; the gray intolerable misery of it all; the sick and the dead—Morning was glutted with the colossal derangement. And they called it an orderly retreat.

He was riding the sorrel Eve out of the zone of war. The battle was behind him now, and he breathed the world again. He had something to tell. Liaoyang was in his brain. He was off for the ships that sail. A month—America—the great story. . . . He felt the manuscript against him. It was in a Chinese belt, with money for the passage home, tight against his body, a hundred thousand words done on Chinese parchment and wrapped in oil-skin. The book of Liaoyang—he had earned it. He had written it against the warping cynicism of Duke Fallows. On the ship he could reshape and renew it all into a master-picture.

It had been easier than he thought to break away from Fallows, his friend. The latter was whelmed in

the soul of the Ploughman. A big story, of course, as Fallows saw it—but there were scores of big stories. It would ruin it to let an anarchist tell it. Suppose officers in general did stop to listen to troops sneaking off the field?

Duke had given him a letter, and a story for the *Western States*. The first was not to be read until he was at sea out from Japan. When Morning spoke of the money he owed, the other had put the thought away. Sometime he would call for it if he needed it; it was a trifle anyway. . . . It hadn't been a trifle. It had meant everything.

Morning was glad to breathe himself again. Yet there was an ache in his heart for Duke Fallows, now off for Europe the western way. He, Morning, had not done his part. He hadn't given as he had taken; had not kept close to Duke Fallows at the last. There was a big score that money could never settle. Soundly glad to be alone, but in the very gladness the picture of Duke Fallows returned—lying on his back, in bunks and berths and beds, staring up at the ceiling, accentuating his own failures to bring out the hopeful and valorous parts of his friend. It was always such a picture to Morning, when Fallows came to mind—staring, dreaming, looking up from his back. It had seemed sometimes as if he were trying to make of his friend all that he had failed to be. . . . Yet the Duke Fallows of the last twenty-four hours, wild, dithyrambic—had been too much. . . . Again and again, irked and heavy with his own limitations, Morning's brain had seized upon the weakness of the other, to condone his own slowness of understanding. . . . It may have been Eve, and her relation to the Fallows revelation, or it may have been putting hideous militarism behind, that made John Morning think of Women now as he rode, and a little differently from ever before. . . . Certain laughing sentences of Duke Fallows came back to him presently,

with a point he seemed to have missed when they were uttered:

"We have our devils, John. You have ambition; Lowenkampf has drink; Mergenthaler has slaughter. . . . You will love a woman; you already drink too readily, but Ambition will stand in your house and fight from room to room at the last—and over the premises to the last ditch. He's a grand devil—is Ambition. . . . My devil, John? Well, it isn't the big-jawed male who loves a woman as she dreams to be loved. It's the man with a touch of women in him—just enough to begin upon her mystery. . . . When I hear a certain woman's voice, or see a certain passing figure—something old, very old and wise, stirs within, seems to stir and thrill with eternal life. And, John, it isn't low—the thought. I'd tell you if it were. It isn't low. It's as regal as Mother Nature in a valley, on a long afternoon. It isn't that I want to hurt her; it isn't that I want something she has. Rather, I want all she has! I want her mind; I want her soul; I want her full animations. I want to make her yield and give; I want to feel her battle with herself, not to yield and give. . . . Oh, the flesh is nothing. It is the cheapest thing in the world—but her giving, her yielding—it's like an ocean tide. It breaks every bond; it laughs at every law. Power seems to rush into a woman when she yields! That's the conquest of my heart—to feel that power. . . . All devils are young compared to that in a man's heart—all but one, and that is the passion to hold spiritual dominion over other men."

Morning's mind had fallen into the habit of allowing much for the other's sayings—of accepting much as mere facility. . . . Thus he thought as he traveled in the rain, Eve's swift, springy trot a stimulus to deep thinking; and always there was a bigger and finer John Morning shadowing him, fathoming his smallnesses, wondering at his puny rebellions and vain desires. It

was in this fairer John Morning, so tragically unexpressed during the past few months, that the pang lived—the pang of parting from his friend.

Morning was terrific physically. The thing he was now doing was as spectacular a bit of newspaper service as ever correspondent undertook in Asia; and yet, to John Morning the high light of achievement fell upon the manuscript, not upon the action. It had not occurred to him to be afraid. If he could get across the ninety miles to Koupangtze—through the *Hun huises*, through the Japanese scouting cavalry, across two large and many smaller yellow rivers—and reach the railroad, he would quickly get a ship for Japan from Tientsin or Tongu—and from Japan—*home*. . . . He was doing it for himself—passionately and with no sense of splendor.

Fallows had been so sure of his friend's physical courage, that he made no point of it, in the expression of attachment. . . . He had called it vision at first, this thing that had drawn him to John Morning—a touch of the poet, a touch of the feminine—others might have called it. No matter the name, he had seen it, as all artists of the expression of the inner life recognize it in one another; and Fallows knew well that where the courage of the soldier ends, the courage of the visionary begins.

Morning was a trifle peculiar, however. Unless it sank utterly, he stuck to a ship, until the horizon revealed another sail.

He had come up through the dark. The world had grounded him deeply in illusion. Most brilliant of promises—even Fallows had not seen him that first day in too bright a dawn—but he learned hard. And his had been close fighting—such desperate fighting that one does not hear voices, and one is too deep in the ruck to see the open distance. . . . Much as he had been alone—the world had invariably shattered his silences. Always

he had worked—worked, worked furiously, angrily, for himself. . . . He was taught so. The world had caught him as a child in his brief, pitiful tenderness. The world was his Eli. As from sleep, he had heard Reality calling. He had risen to answer, but the false Eli had spoken—an Eli that did not teach him truly to listen, nor to say, when he heard the Voice another time—“Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.”

## 14

THE Taitse, of large and ancient establishment, runs westward from Liaoyang for twenty-five miles, and in a well-earned bed, portions of which are worn in the rock. Morning rode along the north bank, thus avoiding altogether a crossing of the Taitse, since his journey continued westward from the point where the river took its southward bend. From thence it paralleled the Hun in a race to join the Liao. The main stem of the latter was beyond the Hun, and these two arteries of Asia broke Morning's trail. Fording streams of such magnitude was out of the question, and there was a strong chance of an encounter with the *Hun huises* at the ferries. . . .

Rain, and the sorrel's round hoofs sucked sharply in the clay. She had no shoes to lose in these drawing vacuums. The scent of her came up warm and good to the horse-lover. Alone on a road, she had always been manageable, hating crowds and noise—soldiers, Chinese, and accoutrements. Perhaps, this was merely a biding of time. Eve had a fine sense of keeping a strange road. This was not usual, although a horse travels a familiar road in the darkness better than a man. These two worked well together.

By map the distance from Liaoyang to Koupangtse was seventy miles. Morning counted upon ninety, at least. The Manchurian roads are old and odd as the

Oriental mind. . . . He passed the southward bend of the big river, and at daybreak reached Chiensen, ten miles beyond, on the Hun.

Chiensen, unavoidable on account of the ferry, was a danger-point. Japanese cavalry, it was reported, frequently lit there, and the *Hun huises* (Chinese river-pirates and thieves in general, whom Alexieff designated well as "the scourge of Manchuria") were at base in this village. . . . In the gray he found junks, a flat tow and landing.

You never know what Chinese John is going to do. If you have but little ground of language between you, he will take his own way, on the pretext of misunderstanding. Morning's idea was to get across quickly, without arousing the river-front. He awoke the ferryman, placing three silver taels in his hand. (He carried silver, enough native currency to get him to Japan, his passport, and the two large envelopes Duke Fallows had given him, in the hip-pockets of his riding breeches.) The ferryman had no thought of making the first crossing without tea. Morning labored with him, and with seeming effect for a moment, but the other fell suddenly from grace and aroused his family. He was not delicate about it. Morning resigned himself to the delay, and was firmly persuading Eve to be moderate, as she drank from the river's edge, when Chinese John suddenly aroused the river population. Standing well out on the tow-flat, he trumpeted at some comrade of the night before, apparently no less than a hundred yards up the river. There were sleepy answers from many junks within range of the voice. It was the one hateful thing to John Morning—yet to rough it with the ferryman for his point of view would be the only thing worse.

The landing was rickety; its jointure with the tow-boat imperfect. The American took off his coat, tossed it over the sorrel's head, tying the sleeves under her throat. She stiffened in rebellion, but as the darkness



was as yet little broken by the day, she decided to accept the situation. Morning felt her growing reluctance, however, as she traversed the creaking, springy boards. The crevasse between the landing and the craft was bridged; and the latter, grounded on the shore-side, did not give. The mare stood in the center of the tow, sweating and tense.

Numerous Chinese were now abroad—eager, even insistent, to help. Their voices stirred the mare to her old red-eyed insanity. Morning could hold himself no longer. Once or twice before in his life this hard, bright light had come to his brain. Though the exterior light was imperfect, the ferryman saw the fingers close upon the butt of the gun, and something of the American's look. He dropped his tea, sprang to the junk and pulled up the bamboo-sail. This was used to hold the tow against the current.

Two natives in the flat-boat stood ready with poles. And now the ferryman spoke in a surprised and disappointed way as he toiled in front. He seemed ready to burst into tears; and the two nearer Morning grunted in majors and minors, according to temperament. The American considered that it might all be innocent, although the voices were many from the town-front. Poling began; the tow drew off from the landing. Clear from the grounding of the shore, the craft sank windily to its balance in the stream.

This was too much for Eve. Her devil was in the empty saddle. She leaped up pawing. The two Chinese at the poles dived over side abruptly. Water splashed Eve's flanks, and she veered about on her hind feet—blinded and striking the air in front. The wobble of the tow now finished her frenzy—and back she went into the stream. The saddle saved her spine from a gash on the edge of the tow. Morning had this thought when Eve arose; that he need fear no treachery from the Chinese; and this as she fell—a queer, cool, laughing

thought—that after such a fall she would never walk like a man again.

He had been forced to drop the bridle, but caught it luckily with one of the poles as she came up struggling. He beckoned the ferryman forward, and Eve, swimming and fighting, was towed across. To Morning it was like one of his adventures back in the days of the race-horse shipping.

Eve struck the opposite bank—half-strangled from her struggle and the blind. The day had come. The nameless little town on this side of the Hun was out to meet him. Had he brought a Korean tiger by a string, however, he could not have enjoyed more space—as the mare climbed from the stream. He talked to her and unbound her eyes. Red and deeply baleful they were. She shook her head and parted her jaws. The circle of natives widened. Morning straightened the saddle and patted Eve's neck softly, talking modestly of her exploit.

. . . Natives were now hailing from mid-stream, so he leaped into the sticky saddle and guided the mare out to the main road leading to Tawan on the Liao.

. . . Queerly enough, just at this instant, he remembered the hands, and the lips of the ferryman—a leper.

Ten miles on the map—he could count thirteen by the road—and then the Liao crossing. . . . The mare pounded on until they came to a wild hollow, rock-strewn, among deserted hills. Morning drew up, cooled his mount and fed the soaked grain strapped to the saddle since the night before. Eve was not too cross to eat—nor too tired. She lifted her head often and drew in the air with the sound of a bubble-pipe. . . . Just now Morning noted a wrinkle in his saddle blanket. Hot with dread, he loosed the girth.

He looked around in terror lest anyone see his own shame and fear. He had put the saddle on in the dark, but passed his hand between her back and the cloth. Long ago a trainer had whipped him for a bad bit of

saddling; even at the time he had felt the whipping deserved. He lifted the saddle. A pink scalded mouth the size of a twenty-five-cent piece was there. . . . God, if he could only be whipped now. She was sensitive as satin; it was only a little wrinkle of the rain-soaked blanket. . . . His voice whimpered as he spoke to her.

Only a horseman could have suffered so. He washed the rub, packed soft lint from a Russian first-aid bandage about to ease the pressure; and then, since the rain had stopped again, he rubbed her dry and walked at her head for hours, despairing at last of the town named Tawan. The Liao was visible before the village itself. Morning shook with fatigue. He had to gain the saddle for the possible need of swift action, but the wound beneath never left his mind. It uncentered his self-confidence—a force badly needed now.

And this was the Liao—the last big river, roughly half-way. The end of the war-zone, it was, too, but the bright point of peril from *Hun huises*. . . . Morning saw the thin masts of the river junks over the bowl of the hill, their tribute flags flying. . . . To pass was the day's work, to make the ferry with Eve. There was too much misery and contrition in his heart for him to handle her roughly. The blind could not be used again. She would connect that with the back-fall into the Hun. The town was full of voices.

## 15

CHINESE were gathering. Morning went about his business as if all were well, but nothing was good to him about the increase of these hard, quick-handed men. They were almost like Japanese. With the tail of his eye, he saw shirt signals across the river. The main junk fleet was opposite. Trouble—he knew it. The hard, bright light was in his brain.

In the gathering of the natives, Eve was roused afresh. His only way was to try her without the blind. If she showed fight, he meant to mount quickly and ride back through the crowd for one of the lower-town crossings.

Without looking back, he led the way to the landing, holding just the weight of the bridle-rein. His arm gave with her every hesitation. To his amazement she consented to try. The tow-craft was larger here—enough for a bullock-pair and cart—and better fitted to the landing. Step by step she went with him to her place.

Now Morning saw that in using the blind the first time he had done her another injury. She would not have gone back into the Hun but for that. She awed him. Something Fallows had said recurred—about her being unconquerable, different every day. Also Fallows had said, “She will kill you at the last. . . .”

He drove back the Chinese, all but two pole-men, that would have gathered on the tow. This was quietly done, but his inflexibility was felt. Many signals were sent across, as the tow receded from the shore, and numbers increased on the opposite bank.

Eve, breathing audibly, swung forward and back with the craft, as it gave to the river. The towing junk, as in the Hun, held the other against the current; the rest was poling and paddling. . . . The junk itself slipped out of the way as the tow was warped toward the landing. Other junks were stealing in. . . . Morning already had paid. He felt the girth of the saddle, fingered the bridle, tightened his belt. A warm, gray day, but he was spent and gaunt and cold. Eve was hushed—mulling her bit softly, trembling with hatred for the Chinese.

The road ascended from the river, through a narrow gorge with rocky walls. The river-men were woven across the way. While the tow was yet fifteen feet from

the landing, Morning gained the saddle. The ferry-man gestured frantically that this had never been done before; that a man's beast properly should be led across. Morning laughed, tightened his knees, and at an early instant loosened the bridle-rein, for the mare to jump. The heavy tow shot back as she cleared the fissure of stream.

Morning was now caught in the blur of events. The Chinese did not give way for the mare, as she trotted across the boards to the rocky shore. Up she went striking. Again he had not known Eve. The back-dive into the Hun had not cured her. She would walk like a man and pitch back into Hell—and do it again. . . . Someone knifed her from the side and she toppled.

The fall was swift and terrible, for the trail sloped behind. Morning's instinct was truer than his brain, but there was no choice of way to jump. He could not push the mare from him completely to avoid the cliff. He was half-stunned against the wall, and not clear from the struggle of her fall. The brain is never able to report this instant afterward, even though consciousness is not lost. He was struck, trampled; he felt the cold of the rock against his breast, and the burn of a knife.

The Chinese struck at him as he rose. The mare was up, facing him, but dragging him upward, as a dog with a bone. His left hand found the pistol. He cleared the Chinese from him, emptying the chambers. . . . Eve let him come to her. He must have gained the saddle as she swung around in the narrow gorge to begin her run. The wind rushed coldly across his breast and abdomen. His shirt had been cut and pulled free. It was covered with blood. He tried to hold the mare, but either his strength was gone or she was past feeling the bit. It was her hour. All Morning could do was to keep the road.

He was all but knocked out. He had mounted as a

fighter gets up under the count—and fights on without exactly knowing. The mare was running head down. He tried his strength again. The reins were rigid; she had the bit and meant to end the game. . . . He loved her wild heart; mourned for her; called her name; told her of wrongs he had done. Again and again, the light went from him; sometimes he drooped forward to her thin, short mane, and clung there, but the heat of her made him ill. They came into hills, passed tiny villages. It was all strange and terrible—a hurtling from high heaven. . . . Eve was like a furnace. . . .

And now she was weaving on the road—running drunkenly, unless his eyes betrayed. . . . The rushing wind was cold upon his breast. His coat was gone; his shirt had been cut. He tried to pull the blood-soaked ends together. At this moment the blow fell.

These Chinese had been quick-handed, and they knew where to search for a man's goods. He was coldly sane in an instant, for the rending of his whole nature; then came the quick zeal for death—the intolerableness of living an instant. The wallet—the big story—some hundreds of tales in paper! It was the passing of these from next his body that had left him cold. . . . Fury must have come to his arms. The mare lifted her head under his sudden attack.

Yes, he could manage her now. The bloody mouth and the blind-mad head came up to him—her front legs giving like a colt's. Down they went together. Morning took his fall limply, with something of supremely organized indifference, and turned in the mud to the mare.

She was dead. The gray of pearl was in her eyes where red life had been. . . . No, she raised herself forward, seemed to be searching for him, her muzzle sickly relaxed. She could not stir behind. Holding there for a second—John Morning forgot the big story.

Eve fell again. He crawled to her—tried to lift her head. It was heavy as a sheet-anchor to his arms. . . . Her heart had broken. She had died on her feet—the last rising was but a galvanism. . . . He looked up into the gray sky where the clouds stirred sleepily. He wanted to ask something from something there. . . . He could not think of what he wanted. . . . Oh, yes, his book of Liaoyang.

And now his eye roved over the mare. . . . Her hind legs were sheeted with fresh blood and clotted with dry. . . . Desperately he craned about to see further. Entrails were protruding from a knife wound. The inner tissues were not cut, but the opened gash had let them sag horribly. She had run from Tawan with that wound. . . . He had worn her to the quick in night; blinded her for the Hun crossing, when she would have done nobly with eyes uncovered. . . . He had not been able to keep her from killing herself. . . . John Morning, the horseman. . . . He had left a gaping wound in the spirit of Duke Fallows. . . . All that he had done was failure and loss; all that he had planned so passionately, so brutally, indeed, that the needs and the offerings of others had not reached his heart, because of the iron self-purpose weighed there.

Luban, Lowenkampf, Mergenthaler, even the Commander-in-chief, looked strangely in through the darkened windows of his mind. The moral suffocation of the grain-fields surged over him again. . . . He caught a glimpse of that last moment in the ravine, but not the taking of the wallet. . . . Was it just a dream that a native leaped forward to grasp his stirrup, and that he leaned down to fire? He seemed to recall the altered brow.

The pictures came too fast. The sky did not change. The something did not answer. . . . Eve was lying in the mud. She looked darker and huddled. He kissed her face, and as he gained his feet, the thought came

queerly that *he* might be dead, as she was. He held the thought of action to his limbs and made them move.

When he could think more clearly, he scorned the pain and protest of his limbs. He would not be less than Eve. If he were not dead, he would die straight up, and on the road to Koupangtse.

## 16

**T**HIRTY-SIX hours after Morning left Eve, an English correspondent at Shanhaikwan added the following to a long descriptive letter made up of refugee tales, and the edges and hearsay of the war-zone:

Night of Sept. 5. . . . An American whose name by passport is John Morning reached here tonight on the *Chinese Eastern*, having left Koupangtse this morning. According to his story, he was with the Russians, now in retreat from Liaoyang, on the night of Sept. 3, only forty-eight hours from this writing.

Morning was in an unconscious condition upon arrival. His passage had been fourth-class for the journey, and he was packed among the coolies and refugees on an open flat-car so crowded that all but the desperately fatigued had room only to stand. This white man had fallen to the floor of the car, among the bare feet of the surging Oriental crowd, beneath their foul garments.

. . . He was lifted forth from the car by the Chinese—a spectacle abjectly human, covered with filth; moreover, his body was incredibly bruised, his left puttee legging torn by a deep knife-wound that began at the knee, and traversed a distance of eight inches downward—the whole was gummed and black with blood; another knife-wound in his side was in an angry condition, and his clothing was stiffened from flow of it.



A few *taels* in paper and silver were found upon him; the passport, an unopened letter addressed to himself; also a manuscript addressed to a San Francisco paper, and to be delivered by John Morning. The natives reported that he had reached Koupangtse an hour before the arrival of the *Chinese Eastern*; had employed a native to buy him fourth-class passage, paying the native also to help him aboard. He had collapsed, however, until actually among the Chinese on the flat-car. He had tasted neither food nor drink during the long day's journey, nor in Koupangtse during the wait. The natives affirm that he crawled part of the distance up to the railway station; and that there were no English or Americans there.

Upon reaching here, Morning was revived with stimulants, his wounds bathed and dressed, fresh clothing provided. His extraordinary vitality and courage indicate that he will overcome the shocks and exhaustion of a journey hardly paralleled anywhere, if his story be true. He asserts that he must be on his way to Tientsin to-morrow morning—but that, of course, is impossible. . . . He is not in condition to answer questions, although undoubtedly much is in his dazed and stricken brain for which the world is at this moment waiting.

In his half-delirium, Morning seems occupied with the loss of a certain sorrel mare. He also reports the loss of his complete story of the battle, the preliminary fighting, the generals in character sketch, the terrain and all, covering a period of four months up to the moment of General Zarubaieff's withdrawal from the city proper. This manuscript, said to contain over a hundred thousand words done on Chinese parchment, was in a wallet with the writer's money, and was cut from him in the struggle on the bank of

the Liao, when the wounds were received. His assailants were doubtless *Hun huises*.

Whatever can be said about the irrational parts of his story, the young man appears to know the story of the battle from the Russian standpoint. He brings the peculiar point of view that it was the millet that defeated the Russians, although the superiority of the Japanese in *morale*, marksmanship, fluidity, is well known, etc.

. . . Morning lay in a decent room at the Rest House in Shanhaikwan. There seemed an ivory finger in his brain pointing to the sea—to Japan, to the States. So long as he was walking, riding, entrained, all was well enough, and the rest was mere body that had to obey—but when he stopped, the ivory finger grew hot or icy by turns; and as now, he watched in agony for the day and the departure of the train for Tientsin.

He would require help. Below the waist he was excruciating wreckage that for the present would not answer his will. . . . They were good to him here. The Chinese coolies had been good to him on the open car. . . . Lowenkampf, Fallows, good to him—so his thoughts ran—the sorrel Eve was his own heart's mate. He loved her running, dying, striking. She had run until her heart broke. He could not do less. She had run until she was past pain—he must do that—and go on after that. . . . Was it still in his brain—the great story? Would it clear and write itself—the great story?

That was the question. All was well if he could get Liaoyang out in words. He would do it all over again on the ship. Every day the ship would be carrying him closer to the States. He was still on schedule. He would reach America on the first possible ship after the battle of Liaoyang—possibly, ahead of mails. On the voyage he would re-do the book—twenty days—five thousand words a day. He might do it better. It might

come up clean out of the journey, the battle itself and the pictures strengthened, brightened, impregnated with fresh power. . . . Three weeks—every moment sailing to the States—the first and fastest ship! . . . The driving devil in his brain would be at rest. The big story would clear, as he began to write. The days of labor at first would change to days of pure instrumentation. He would drive at first—then the task would drive him. . . . But he must not miss a possible day to Japan—to Nagasaki. . . . He had not money for the passage to America. At this very moment he could not get out of bed—but these two were mere pups compared to the wolves he had met. . . .

They found him on the floor drawing on his clothes in the morning—an hour before the train. His wounds were bleeding, but he laughed at that.

“You see, I’ve got to make it. You’ve been very kind. I’ll heal on the way—not here. I’ve got the big story. I’ve got to keep moving to think it out. I can’t think here. I’ll get on—thank you.”

And he was on. That night his train stopped for ten minutes at Tongu, the town near the Taku Forts, at the mouth of the Pei-ho. . . . All day he had considered the chance of getting ship here, without going on to Tientsin, seventy miles up-river. The larger ships lightered their traffic from Tongu; he might catch a steamer sailing to-night for Japan, or at least for Chifu. . . . It was getting dark.

The face that looked through the barred window at the Englishman in charge of the station at Tongu unsettled the latter’s evening and many evenings afterward.

“Is there a ship from the river-mouth to-night?”

Morning repeated his question, and perceived that the agent had dropped his eyes to the two hands holding the ticket-shelf. Morning’s nails were tight in the wood; he would wobble if he let go.

"Yes, there's the little *Tungsheng*. She goes off to-night——"

"For Japan?"

"Yes, but she doesn't carry passengers—that is—unless the Captain gives up his quarters, and he has already done that this trip."

"Deck passengers——"

"Sure, all carry coolies out of here—best freight we have."

"Do you sell the tickets?"

"Who's going?"

"My servant. . . . I won't go on to Tientsin if I can get—get him on to-night——"

"The launch and lighter are supposed to be down shortly from Tientsin—that's all I can say. It's blowing a bit. She may not clear."

"She'll clear if any does?"

"Yes, Himmelhock has taken her out of here worse than this. You'd better decide—I've got to go out now. The train's leaving."

Seventy miles up the river, he thought,—the wrong way if he stuck to the train. Every mile that ivory finger would torture him. His brain now seemed holding back an avalanche. If he chose falsely, he would tumble down the blackness with the rocks and glaciers. . . . This Englishman looked a gamester—he might help. Perhaps he wasn't a corpse.

"I'll stay," he said, and the story and all his purpose wobbled and grew black. . . . He mustn't forget. He mustn't fall. . . . So he stood there holding fast to the ticket-shelf, which he could not feel—held and held, and the train clattered, grew silent, and it was dark.

"Where's your servant?"

Morning's lips moved.

"Where is your servant?"

"I am my servant."

"I can't give a white man deck passage. It's not only against the rules—but against reason."

Morning groped for his arm. "Take me into the light," he said.

The man obeyed.

"What day is this?"

"Night of September six."

"I left Liaoyang the night of the third. I rode a good horse to death—along the Taitse, over the Hun and the Liao. I rode through the *Hun huises* twice. I was all cut up and beaten—the horse went over backward in the Hun, and in the gut on the bank of the Liao. . . . I was in Liaoyang for the battle. I was there four months waiting for the battle. They took my story—hundred thousand words—the *Hun huises* did, in the fight on the Liao bank. The horse killed herself running with me . . . but I've got it all in my head—the story. I'll get to the States with it before any mail—before any other man. It's all in my head—the whole Russian-end. I can write it again on the ship to the States in three weeks. . . . I've got to get off to-night. You're the one to help me. . . . See these——"

Morning opened his shirt and then started to undo his legging.

"For God's sake—don't. . . . But you'll die on the deck——"

"No, the only way to kill me would be to wall me up—so I couldn't keep moving."

"I'll go down to the river with you in a few minutes."

And then he had John Morning sobbing on his shoulder.

**T**HE Englishman at Tongu was a small, sallow man, with the face of one who is used to getting the worst of it. Tongu, as a post, was no exception from an outsider's point of view. Morning saw this face in

odd lights during the days that followed. It came to the chamber of images—and always he wanted to break down, and his hands went out for the shoulder. . . . He remembered a pitching junk in the windy blackness at the mouth of the Pei-ho. (He had seen the low mud-flats of the Taku forts from here in another service.) . . . The *Tungsheng* looked little—not much bigger than the junk, and she was wooden. There was chill and a slap of rain in the blackness.

“Hul-lo, who is dere?” The slow, juicy voice came from the door of the pilot-house.

“Endicott. I’ve got a deck passenger——”

“Huh—dere dick as meggots alretty——”

“This is a kitchen coolie of mine—he must go. Send someone down to make a place and take his transportation——”

The grumbling that followed was a matter of habit rather than of effectiveness. Morning seemed to see the lower lip from which the voice came, a thick and lumpy member. . . . The mate came down, stepping from shoulder to back, across the complaining natives. They were three deep on the deck. He kicked clear a hole in the lee of the cabin. . . . Morning sank in, and Endicott bent to whisper:

“Put the grub-basket between your knees and don’t take your hands off it. . . . Put the blanket over it. It’s a thick, good blanket. I could give you a better passage, but they wouldn’t take you—honest, they wouldn’t. If they see you’re white, tell old Himmelhock you’re Endicott’s house-coolie. He can’t do anything now. . . . If you live, write and send the big story to Endicott at Tongu.”

Morning was sinking to sleep. He felt the warmth of the blanket, a thick, rough blanket Endicott had donated. Its warmth was like the man’s heart. . . . Morning’s hands went out. A coolie growled at him. . . . There was no worry now. It was the night of

the sixth, and he was sailing. He could do no more; the ivory finger in his brain neither froze nor burned. . . . The pitching did not rouse him—nor the men of sewers and fields—sick where they sat—woven, matted together, trusting to the animal heat of the mass to keep from dying of exposure. John Morning lay in the midst of them—John Morning whose body would not die.

The days and nights rushed together. . . .

Sometimes he wondered if he were not back at the shipping—in some stock-car with the horses—but horses were so clean compared to this. . . . When he could think, he put clean lint to his wounds. He scorned pain, for he was on his way; and much was merciful coma.

There was rain, deluges; and though the air rose heavy as amber afterward, the freshness at the time was salvation. He learned as it is probable no other American ever learned, what it means to live in the muck of men. All one at the beginning and at the ending, it is marvelous how men separate their lives in the interval—how little they know of one another, and how easily foolish noses turn up. Here was a man alive—dreaming of the baths he had missed, of Japanese Inn baths most of all.

“Who am I?” he asked. . . . “John Morning,” would whip back to him from somewhere. “And who in hell is John Morning to revolt at the sufferings of other men?”

He had seen the coolies in the steerage of many ships—even these massed deck passages of the Yellow and China Seas and the Coasting trade. He had looked at them before as one looks into a cage of animals. Now he was one of those who looked out, one of the *slumees*. Once he asked, “Is this the bottom of the human drain, and if not—must I sink to it?”

The Chinese did steal his food that first night, but fed him occasionally from their own stock. Finding him white, they fouled him, but kept him warm. . . .

The *Tungsheng* ran into Chifu harbor to avoid a storm, and a full day was lost. John Morning had no philosophy then—a hell-minded male full of sickness—not good to view, even through the bars of a cage. But at best to sit five hours, where he sat more than five days and nights, would condemn the mind of any white man or woman to chaos, or else restore it to the fine sanity of Brotherhood.

And then the day when the breeze turned warm and the Islands were green! . . . Coolies were men that hour, men with eyes that melted to ineffable softness. It was like Jesus coming toward them on the sea—the green hills of Japan. Their hearts broke with emotion; they wept and loved one another—this mass all molten and integrated into one. It was like the Savior coming to meet them through the warm bright air. He would make them clean; their eyes would follow Him always. . . .

Morning was not the only one who had to be carried ashore at Shimoneseki, after the quarantine officer had finished with the herd. His passport saved him. "I had to come. It was the first ship out of Tongu. Deck passage was the only way they would take me," was the simple story. He was fevered, but strangely subdued that day. Himmelhock was at the door of the pilot-house, when Morning looked up from the shore a last time, and his native sailors, bare to the thigh, were sluicing the decks.

The bath was heaven. He was able to walk afterward. The officials burned his clothing, but made it possible for him to buy a few light things. The wound in his leg was healing; the bruises fading away. The wound in his side did not heal; it was angry as a feline mouth.

He had bandages, but no stockings; clean canvas clothing, but no underwear. . . . He found that he had to wait before answering when anyone spoke; and



then he was not quite sure if he had answered, and would try again—until they stopped him. Somewhere long ago there was a parrot whose eyes were rimmed—with red-brown, and of stony opaqueness. He couldn't recall where the parrot was, but it had something to do with him when he was little, almost beyond memory. His eyes now felt just as the parrot's had looked.

It was a night run back to Nagasaki by rail—his thought was of ships, ships, ships. He could stand off from the world and see the ships—all the lines of tossing, steaming ships. Then he would go down to the deck of one—and below and aft where Asiatics were crowded together. To the darkest and thickest place among them he would go, and there lie and rest until the finger in his brain roused him. Then he would find that the train had stopped. It was the halt that awakened him.

There were two ships, all but ready to clear for the States, lying in the harbor of Nagasaki that morning. The first was the liner *Coptic*, but she had to go north first, a day at Kobe, and two days at Yokohama, before taking the long southeastern slide to Honolulu. She was faster than the American transport, *Sickles* (with a light load of sick and insane from the Islands), but the latter was clearing for Honolulu at sundown and would reach San Francisco at least one day earlier than the liner. Moreover, the *Coptic* would have recent mails; the *Sickles* would beat the mails.

Money was waiting for him at Tokyo, less than an hour's journey from Yokohama; he would have good care and a comfortable passage home on the old liner, but his brain burned at the thought. Four days north—not homeward. . . . The *Sickles* was clipper-built—she was white and clean-lined, lying out in the harbor, in the midst of black collier babies. She was off for Home to-night. He had traveled home once before on a transport. He was American and she—the flag was

there, run together a bit in the vivid light, but the flag was there! And to-night he would be at sea—pulling himself together for the big story, alone with the big story—the ship never stopping—unless they stopped in ocean to drop the dead. . . .

The actual cost of the transport passage is very little, merely a computation for food and berth; the difficulty is to obtain the permit. As it was, he had not enough money, barely enough to get up to Yokohama, second class on the *Coptic*; and yet, this hardly entered. It was like a home city, this American ship, to one who had been in the alien heart of the Chinese country so long. He would know someone, and a telegram from 'Frisco would bring money to him. He had a mighty reliance from the big story.

The U. S. quartermaster at Nagasaki was a tired old man. He advised Morning to cable to Manila for permission. Morning did not say that he lacked money for this, but repeated his wish to go. The old man thought a minute and then referred him to Ferry, the *Sickles* quartermaster. He had been doing this for thirty years, referring others to others so that all matters merely struck and glanced from him. Thus he kept an open mind. Morning wanted something to take from this office to Ferry of the *Sickles*. The resistance he encountered heated him. The smell of the deck-passage was in his nostrils; it seemed in his veins, and made him afraid that others caught the taint. The old quartermaster did not help him. Morning could hear his own voice, but could not hold in mind what he said. . . . The officer did not seem to be interested in Liaoyang. This disturbed him. It made him ask if he had not gone mad after all—if he could be wrong on this main trend, that he had something the world wanted.

He took a *sampan* at the harbor-front and went aboard the transport. Ferry, the *Sickles* quartermaster, was a tall, lean man with a shut smile that drooped.

The face was a pinched and diminished Mergenthaler, and brought out the clouds and the manias of Morning's mind.

Were all quartermasters the same? What had become of men? Had the world lost interest in monster heroisms? Ferry did not help him—on the contrary, stood looking down with the insolence of superior inches. Morning found himself telling about the sorrel mare. That would not do. He returned to the main fact that he had the big story and must get across the Pacific with it.

"I can't take you——"

Morning heard it, but couldn't believe. He tried to tell about the *Hun huises* and the loss of the manuscript, the walk to Koupangtse——

"Really—it's no affair of mine. I can't take you on. . . . The *Coptic* is sailing——"

And just now Mr. Reeve Kennard appeared on the deck. The summer had added portliness. He was in flannels—a spectacle for children and animals. . . . The insignificance of all about was quickened when Mr. Reeve Kennard appeared. The decks were less white, sailors, soldiers more enlisted. John Morning became an integer of the *Tungsheng's* deck-passage again, and the lining of his nostrils retained the reek of it.

"How do you do, Mr. Kennard?" he said. His back was different. He felt a leniency there, very new or very ancient, as he turned to Ferry, adding: "This gentleman knows me. We parted in Tokyo this Spring, when I went over with the Russians. I met him long ago in the Philippine service. He will tell you——"

Ferry's face grew suddenly saturnine, his eyes held in the glance of the famous correspondent's.

"You'll please count it closed—I can't take you."

Morning now turned to Kennard, who was sealing with his tongue a little flap of cigar-wrapper which may have prevented the perfect draught. Morning bowed

and moved aft, where the dust of the coaling was thick, and the scores of natives, women and men, who handled the baskets, were a distraction which kept the reality from stifling him. Presently he went ashore and it was noon. . . . He could not understand Kennard; could not believe in an American doing what Ferry had done, to a man who had the big story of Liaoyang. It was some hideous mistake; he had not been able to make himself understood.

The *Sickles* launch was leaving the pier at two. Morning was there and took a seat. He was holding himself—the avalanche again—and rehearsing in his mind what he should say to Ferry. His brain was afire; the wound in his side had scalded him so long that his voice had a whimper in it. He had not eaten—the thought was repulsive—but he had bought drink in the thought of clearing his brain and deadening his hurt. . . .

His brain was clearer on the launch, but the gin fumed out of him as he approached the upper deck, where Ferry's quarters were.

The Quartermaster saw him, but was speaking to an infantry captain. Morning waited by the rail. Many times he thought—if he could only begin to speak *now*. Yet he feared in his heart when Ferry turned to him, he would fail. It was something little and testy in the man—something so different from what he had known in the great strains of Liaoyang—except for Luban. Yes, Ferry was like Luban, when Luban was in the presence of a fancied inferior. . . . They talked on—Morning thought of murder at last. A peculiar wiry strength gathered about the idea of murder in its connection with Ferry's dark, mean face. He felt all the old strength in his hands, and more from days of pain—days of holding one's self—will, body, brain.

"Well——" Ferry had turned to him suddenly.

Morning's thoughts winged away with a swarm of

details of the crime. . . . "I could tell you something of the Story—I could show you how they cut me on the Liao—the *Hun huises*—"

"If you come to this deck again—I'll send you ashore in irons."

At four that afternoon Morning saw the *Coptic* draw up her chains and slide out of the harbor, with the swift ease of a river-ferry. . . . He could not count himself whipped on the *Sickles*—and this is the real beginning of John Morning. He was Fate-driven. The man who did not have the courage to ask his rights in Tokyo—to inquire the reason of his disbarment, was not through with the American transport *Sickles*. A full day ahead of the mails in San Francisco—and he was waiting for the dusk. The fight had been brought to him. He was dull to the idea of being whipped.

Three enlisted men were drinking in the little apothecary shop which Morning had used for the day's headquarters. They belonged to the *Sickles*. They had been taking just one more drink for many minutes. He told them he was sailing on the transport and joined them in a *sampan* to the ship when it was dark. The harbor was still as a dream; the dark blending with the water. . . . They touched the bellying white plates of the ship. Morning seemed to come up from infinite depths. . . . The men were very drunk; they had ordered rapidly toward the end; the effect caught up as swiftly now. They helped each other officiously. Morning put on the fallen hat of one who had become unconscious. . . . The watch was of them, a corporal, who was no trouble-maker. He blustered profusely and hurried them below. . . . Morning was bewildered. He had spoken no word, but helped the others carry the body, a wobbly deputation, down among the hammocks. . . . He heard the voices of those maimed in mind. . . . He placed his end of the soldier's body down, left his companions, and made his way forward, to where the

hammocks were farther apart. Early years had given him a sort of enlisted man's consciousness of things; and he knew now not to take another's place. He chose one from a pile of hammocks and slung it forward, close to the bulk-head of the bedlam, and well out of the lights. . . . He lay across his only baggage, a package containing a thousand sheets of Chinese parchment. He lay rigid, trying to remember if out-going ships took a pilot out of Nagasaki.

He heard the anchor-chain. He was very close to it. The voices of the sun-struck and vino-maddened men from the Islands were deadened by the hideous grating of the links in the socket. . . . It was not too late for him to be put ashore even now; since it was war-time. Of course there would be a pilot, for the harbor was mined. . . . He drew the canvas about his ears, but the voices of the brain-dead men reached him. . . . Cats, pirates, and river-reptiles terrified them; one man was still lost in a jungle set with bolo-traps; the emptiness of others was filled by strange abominations glad of the flesh again.

## 18

HE had been listening to Duke Fallows for a long time—Duke's voice blended with war and storm and a woman's laugh. . . . Then he reverted to the idea of murdering Ferry. Finally someone said:

"He's a new one from Nagasaki. He's got the fevers——"

And then:

"Who in hell is he?"

They began to ask questions. Morning answered nothing. Day had come. He heard the throb of the engines, felt the swell of the sea, but the strength of yesterday's concentration was still upon him. It had

built a wall around him, holding the life of his mind there; as a life of low desires imprisons the spirit to its own vile region after death. . . . He did not speak, but looked from face to face for Ferry.

They ceased to expect an answer from him. . . . A young doctor appeared. His eyes rolled queerly; his cheek folded over his mouth, as if he were beyond words from drink, and tremendously pleased with his prowess. They called him Nevin. He prepared himself profoundly for speech. Morning now realized the nimbleness of Nevin's hands, unwinding the filthy bandages. Presently, the Doctor straightened up, passed his hand over his brow, tongued the other cheek, and after a sweating suspense ordered:

"Take him to the hospital."

A white room. . . . The Doctor came again. They took his clothing and bathed him. . . . He heard and smelled the sea through an open port . . . glad, but utterly weary . . . waiting for Ferry.

"My God—not only cut, but trampled——" a voice said.

Morning felt if he were alone with Nevin he could have said something. . . . The Doctor looked like a jockey he had once known. It wasn't that, however, that gave him heart, but the quick, gentle hands. . . . More and more as he watched the dusty face with its ineffable gravity, he saw bright humanity burning like a forge-fire behind the mask. This brought tears to his own eyes. Nevin, seeing them, became altogether nervous to look at, seemed to have a walnut in his mouth.

And now John Morning felt himself breaking—he was brittle, hard like glass—and his last idea concerned the package of Chinese parchment which they had not brought from the hammock. . . . Six days afterward he asked for it.

For a short while each day, during the interval, he just touched the main idea and sank back to sleep. He

suffered very little. The after-effects of his journey from Liaoyang tried to murder him in various ways, but relaxation, nourishment, good air and care worked as a sort of continuous anæsthesia. On this sixth day the Doctor appeared to ignore his question about the package of paper, but leaned forward, glanced to the right and left, as if to communicate a plan to scuttle the ship, and said:

"You're one more little man. You've had a new one each day—pneumonia, sclerosis, brain-fever. . . . My hospital report on your case will drive the Major-Surgeon into permanent retirement. . . . What did you say was the matter to-day—Chinese parchment?"

"I've got so much to do, Doctor? . . . What day is this?"

"Morning of the nineteenth."

The color swept into Morning's face, terror into his eyes.

"I didn't think it was so bad as that—I can't lay up any more—twelve days left. . . . Two weeks and two days since I rode out of Liaoyang——"

"I'll have to let 'em put you in the forward hutch—if you begin to talk Liaoyang, now that your fever's down. There wasn't any Americans in that fighting——"

"I'm not a soldier——"

Nevin wrung his hands. A thought recurred to Morning.

"There was a couple of letters in my clothes—one addressed to a paper in 'Frisco, and one to me."

The other was curious enough to send an orderly to search.

"Have him bring the package of paper, too," Morning said. When all was brought in good order, he added: "This letter to me I'll read later. The larger package is Duke Fallows' first hurried story of the battle of Liaoyang. I won't read that either, because I've got to do



one of my own. I did one, you know—ten times as long as this—but the *Hun huises* got it on the Liao-crossing, from Tawan—that's where I got cut up. Morning of the fourth, it was. . . . The sorrel mare did fifteen miles with her guts sticking out, and I walked thirty to Koupangtse, with these wounds and smashed from a couple of falls—before the morning of the fifth. . . . You can look at Duke Fallows' story, Doctor, and I'll take a little doze——”

Fallows' battle was done clearly as a football game, and as briskly, to the withdrawal of the Russian lines upon the inner positions of the city and the flanking movement of Kuroki. A dramatic pause then to survey the Russian force on the eve of disaster, from which the reader drew the big moral sickness. After that Lowenkampf, the millet and the Ploughman. In quite a remarkable way Fallows turned the reader now from the mass to the individual. In a little trampled place in the grain the battle was lost by the Russians and won by Japan. . . . The Doctor was interrupted several times, but no force was missed. It was a new voice to him. He wondered if Fallows would make the world hear it. It seemed to compel a reckoning.

The Fallows story laughed all the way. One did not have to look twice at a sentence to understand, yet two readings did not wear it out, nor would it leave one alone. All the time the Doctor read, matters he had heard in delirium from the lips of John Morning came back.

Nevin remembered the tears on the first morning, the choke in his own throat; the first sight of the wounds, the queer, extra zeal he had put into this case. Finally he could hardly wait to learn the rest—chiefly how John Morning had happened to be lying in the darkest end of the hammock-hole, over against the insane compartment. . . . Yet he did not wake up his patient. When Morning finally opened his eyes, it was time for

nourishment. Nevin brought a glass of extra wine before inquiring. "First, tell me—has Ferry seen me?"

"Captain Ferry, the quartermaster?"

"Yes."

"I'd rather think not. He's about occasionally—but his truck with the sick men is mostly transportation and nourishment——"

"The second time I came to ask him to take me across that afternoon—the second time," Morning said slowly, "he told me that if I appeared on his deck again he'd send me ashore in irons. You see the *Sickles* is to beat the *Coptic* in. I had to come. Why, the mails couldn't beat me through from Liaoyang. . . . I finally got aboard with some soldiers—but I would have leeched to the anchor. . . . And, say, I think I knew you that morning. It seemed as if I could let go when I felt your hands——"

The two were quiet. The Doctor looked obliquely at an open port with one eye shut, as if he were not sure of the count. . . .

Accompanying the manuscript was a letter to Noyes, editor of *Western States*, which chiefly concerned John Morning. Many brave things were said. . . . Nevin, deeply stirred with the whole business, saw the Ploughman coming forth from the millet—saw the Ploughman going home. That little drama so dear to Fallows' heart *was* greater than Liaoyang. Nevin saw that such things are deathless. . . . Deathless—that's the word. They look little at the time in the midst of thunder and carnage; but the thunder dies away and the rains come and clean the stains—and the spirit of it all lives in one deed or in one sentence. A woman nurses the sick at Scutari, and the Crimean war is known for the angel of its battlefield, by the many who do not know who fought, nor what for. . . . Nevin felt the big forces throbbing in the world—the work of the world. It had come to him distantly before. It had pulled him

out of the comfort and ease of his home town to serve the sick at sea and in the Islands.

The mystery of service. He had never dared tell anyone. His voice broke so easily. He had covered the weakness in leers and impediments, so the world would not see. He had talked of his rights and his wages, the dusty-faced little man. Mystery of Service—and men were ashamed when it touched them.

But Fallows, laughing and so powerful, this boy's man-friend, wasn't afraid. Was the boy afraid? What had driven him? Did the boy know what had driven him? What, in God's name, had driven this human engine that would not stop—that threw off poisons and readjusted itself against the individual and collective organizations of death?

Nevin was shaken by the whole story—it girded, girdled him. . . . Let Ferry come. Ferry was one of those bleak despoilers of human effort, whose presence consumed the reality in another. What was Ferry anyway and Ferry's sort—a spoiled child or an ancient decadent principle? Was it merely a child-soul with a universe ahead, or was he very old and very ill—incorrigible self-love on its road back to nothing? . . . But the Ploughman lived, Fallows lived, the boy Morning lived—their work was marching on.

The Doctor did not speak, because his voice would break. He went about his work instead—swift magnetic hands. . . . At least, he could stand between Morning and the quartermaster—if there were need.

When he came back Morning was at work, a hard bright look of tension about him, and a line of white under the strange young beard. . . .

"I think I can get it going now. I think it is beginning to come again," he said in a hushed tone. The Doctor arranged the pillows better, sharpened an extra pencil and went out.

"I may have to do those first pages again," he said

an hour later. "It's hard to get out of the hospital—you know, what I mean—a man's bath is so important to one lying-up that it shuts out a battle-line. What a fool a sick man is. But I'll get it——"

He fell asleep in the dusk before the candles came. The Doctor found him cool, his breathing normal. . . . The next day Morning worked until Nevin remonstrated.

"You'll die, if you go on——"

"I'll die, if I don't," said Morning. The Doctor knew in his heart that it was true. Still they compromised. That night, as Morning dropped down into an abyss of exhaustion, he mumbled the whole story of Eve—the sorrel mare. "She rose to her feet—white death in her eyes," he finished. . . .

Nothing attracts the eye on ship-board like a man at work. All idle ones are caught in the current and come to pay their devoirs to the man mastered by a strong task. . . . The Doctor had Morning taken to an extra berth in his own state-room. The door had a spring lock, for many medicines and stores were there. Ferry was not likely to happen in the Doctor's quarters. The latter even doubted if he would recognize Morning. He came and went, as the task drove on. Once Morning stopped to tell him about the deck passage on the *Tungsheng*, and another time about his brush with the *Hun huises* in the ravine across the river from Tawan. . . . The Doctor saw that Morning had made a wonderful instrument of himself; he studied how the passion of an artist works on the body of man. The other found that so long as he ate regularly and fell asleep without a struggle—he was allowed to go on.

The *Sickles* was swinging down into the warmth. The sick man had a bad day, lying in the harbor at Honolulu.

"It isn't the work, Doctor—it's the ship's stopping," Morning said, squirming in the berth. "It makes my

head hot. I see steamy and all that. I had it when the *Tungsheng* lay up for a day in Chifu on account of the blow. . . . I had it that day in Nagasaki when Ferry wouldn't take me on. I'll be all right to-night. . . . Give me a little touch of that gin and lime juice——”

“Just lime juice when heads get hot. . . . You're a clever little drunkard. I've been wondering how far you'd go. . . . Yes, we'll clear to-night. . . . Ferry's ashore. Come out and see the black boys dive for pennies.”

“There's something doing with this knife-wound—it doesn't heal,” the Doctor said, mid-way between the Islands and the Farallones. “The leg's all right. Organs and all the little organs seem to thrive on work. That is, they're no worse. The leg heals—but this one—you seem to have established a permanent drain——”

“Fifty pages yesterday—two hundred words a page,” Morning muttered.

“Yes—and the day before—and to-morrow—and the night we left Honolulu. . . . If a man worked that way for money, he'd be as dead as Ferry inside of a month. . . . Have you read your friend Fallows' story yet?”

“No, I don't dare—a sick man isn't all himself. And *this* story is me. It's got to be me. It's better in places than the other, the one I lost. . . . I haven't read Duke's letter to me yet. He's strong medicine. He keeps coming back to me, as it is. I want to get off alone when the work is done and think. You can't see him all, when he's in a room with you. . . . He was like you, in being a friend to me. . . . Yet, I seem to know you better. You've helped me so. I'm pretty happy the way the story is coming——”

“See how long you can go without a drink to-day.”

“It starts me off, you see. It doesn't seem to touch me—just steams right off with the work——”

“That’s rotten sophistry. I’m watching you——”

Nevin had never seen a body so driven by will. Morning appeared no worse; certainly he was no better; his brain was in absolute abeyance; his will crashed through clouds of enervation and irresolution. There were times when Nevin believed Morning would collapse, when he was finished with Liaoyang, but he was not so sure now. He was sure, however, that he must not interfere except in extremity. . . . This was part of the big work. Somehow he trusted in Duke Fallows—who had allowed the boy to write the detailed battle-end, and gone back to Europe to feed the babes of the Ploughman. That last made him want to doctor the whole world. . . .

Morning had done the story and re-written the lead. The *Sickles* would enter the Gate at daylight.

“There’s seventy-five or eighty thousand words of it. It’s good—unless I’m crazy. It’s good, unless this is all a dream. God, I’m thirsty.”

With the work done for the day, however, he asked for lime juice and water. His temperature was less than two points above normal; nothing had broken; yet the voyage had not replenished Morning’s body. He could hardly stand.

“To-night I’ll read the Fallows’ stuff—and the letters. . . . Doctor, can you get me ashore early?”

“Think a minute—you don’t know what you ask——”

“Quarantine——”

Nevin nodded. “There’s extra attention to a ship like this—they’ll have to see that running wound of yours for instance——”

“Not if you don’t report it——”

The Doctor’s lower jaw reached down, and to the right, finding the walnut. “You wouldn’t even read Duke Fallows’ story before you wrote yours. A man can’t lie in his own work——”

"You've been so good," Morning said huskily. "I begin to expect miracles——"

"You can get messages—telegrams, letters—ashore. . . . And then it may only take a couple of hours. There isn't any contagion here that I know of."

Morning first read Fallows' letter to Noyes, editor *Western States*. It told of the story accompanying—but more of the bearer. Laughing, loving-hearted, eloquent—Fallows was all through it, and fine gifts of the man's thinking. There was suggestion to Noyes to use Morning's story and get it across simultaneously in New York. "The boy has never yet, so far as I can see, found time to arrange a decent payment for his work. Please observe that unless some one, equally as capable, gets into Port Arthur, Morning's story will be the biggest feature of the war in a newspaper way. I'm going on to Europe on the Ploughman story. Let Morning do the big battle—I'll begin to crackle later."

And then Morning read the story. . . . His voice trailed up finally from the shadows of lower berth. "It's good," he said to the Doctor after midnight.

"It's dam' good. It's better than mine. . . . He was alive with it—I mean with the *Ploughman*. It's the way he did it. He tried to get it across before we separated. He told me from every angle—told Lowenkampf—told them all at the station at Yentai. None of us could see. . . . He was crazed about it—that we couldn't see. We were all choked with blood and death that night. He said Kuropatkin and the others would see that the Ploughman was right—if they had a sense of humor. Such density to humor, he called the sin against the Holy Ghost——"

After they had talked many minutes, Morning broke the seal to his own letter and learned why he had been barred from the earlier Japanese armies.

THE fineness of Fallows, of Nevin, of Endicott, the station-agent at Tongu, the risen humanity of the Ploughman—Morning's soul to sense these men was empty within him. All that he knew was blood and blow and force and mass and hate. He lay panting and possessed. As he had plotted in delirium how to kill Ferry, dwelling upon the process and the death; so Reeve Kennard came in now for a hatred as perfect and destructive. The letter had called up something of the same force which had driven John Morning from Liaoyang, over or through every barrier to the present hour in which the *Sickles* lay off the entrance of the Golden Gate waiting for dawn, thirty-six hours ahead of the *Coptic*.

His work was diminished in his own mind; the value of his story was lost, the zest to market it, the sense of the world's waiting. He was a thief in the eyes of men. A man cannot steal. They believed him a thief. . . . He thought of moving about the halls of the *Imperial* that day—of his thoughts as he had watched from the window in the billiard-room while the picture was taken. He had been tranced in terror. . . . Had he but known, he would have made a hell in that house. He saw Reeve Kennard again on the deck of the *Sickles*—his turning to Kennard for help—unparalleled shame. . . . The thing he desired with such terrible zeal now was enacted in his brain. That hour on the deck of the *Sickles* was repeated, but this time he knew what Kennard had done. He called him to the lie in imagination. The jowl was heavy with scorn and the small slow eyes were bright with fear—yet they took nothing back and Morning moved closer and closer demanding, until the devil broke from him, and his knotted hand sank into the soft center of the man. He watched the writhing of that clean flanneled liar, watched him arise.



The hand sank once more. . . . the vile play romping through his mind again and again—hideous fighting of a man brought up among stable and race-track and freight-route ruffians—the fighting that feels no pain and only a knockout can stop. . . .

“Wow—it’s hot as hell in here,” came from Nevin in the upper bunk.

A little before dawn, utterly ravaged by the poison of his thinking, Morning was struck by the big idea. He turned on the light, steadied himself to paper and pencil and wrote to Noyes of the *Western States*:

Inclosed find (I) Duke Fallows’ first story of Liaoyang; (II) his letter to you, containing among other things information concerning the bearer; (III) the first ten thousand words of my eighty-thousand-word story of the battle fought a month ago to an hour—including sketches of Kuropatkin, and others, covering exactly terrain, the entire position, strategy, and finally the cause of the Russian disaster, with word-picture of the retreat, done on the day when it was at its height. The writer left the field and made the journey to Koupangtse alone, nearly one hundred miles to the railroad. This is the only American eye-witness story besides Fallows’. The mails of the second-hand reports will not reach here before the arrival of the *Coptic*. . . . I will sell this story to the *Western States* on condition that it appear in the *World-News*, New York, simultaneously—the story to be run in not less than seven installments, beginning by telegraph to-morrow. I insist on the *World-News*, but have no objection to the general syndicating of the story by the *Western States*, my price for the American newspaper rights being \$1,800 and transportation to New York.

“In God’s name, are you doing another book?” Nevin demanded, letting himself down from the berth. “What’s the matter—you’re on fire?”

Morning was counting off the large first installment of his manuscript. He placed it upon the table, with the Fallows' story and the two letters to Noyes. . . . Then he put an empty water-pitcher on it, restoring the balance of his story to its place under his pillow.

"Listen" he said, clutching Nevin's arm, "here's the whole thing—if I'm sick to-morrow. Give it to the reporter from the *Western States*—make him see it is life-blood. Make him rush with it to Noyes. It's the whole business. . . . He'll get it—before the quarantine is lifted, if you—oh, if you can! It's all there. . . . You do this for me?"

"And where will you be all this time——"

"Oh, Nevin—Nevin—for God's sake put me to sleep! I'm full of burning and devils! Fill up that needle business and put me to sleep! . . . I can't wait to get across in the *New York World-News*. That's Reeve Kennard's own paper."

THE voices sounded far and muted—voices one might hear when swimming under water. It was easier for him to stay down than rise and answer. He seemed carried in the strong flow of a river, and preserved a consciousness, very vague, that it meant death to go down with the stream. At last, opening his eyes, he saw the city over the pier-sheds.

The rest of the manuscript was still under the pillow, but the water-pitcher rested upon the bare wood of the table. It was after twelve. His deadly fury had burned itself out. The thought of the *World-News* taking the story, steadied his weakness. It was much harder to dress than usual, however. He had no shore clothes, but Nevin would see to that for him. With a glad thrill, he realized that the *Sickles* had passed the quarantine, or she wouldn't be in the slip. His mind

turned to Nevin again, and when he was thinking about this deep-rooted habit the voyage had inculcated, the Doctor himself entered.

"Well, you gave me a night."

"You'll have some rest now."

"I've brought some clothes for you to go ashore with. . . . The *Western States* got your story two hours ago. Ferry has gone ashore."

"Did the reporter take it here—or from across the harbor in quarantine?"

"He was waiting with others—for us to be turned loose. I gave him the stuff as we were putting about. He didn't come aboard, I saw his launch reach landing. I told him to put the stuff into the hands of Noyes and to hurry back. All of which he did——"

"Why to hurry back?"

The little man's mouth gave way to strange twistings, and he answered grudgingly, "Well, I had a story to give him."

Morning took a room at the Armory, refusing a loan from the Doctor. "I'll have it shortly—plenty, I think. I'll lie up there until I hear from Noyes. I may hurry East——"

The process was not clear exactly, but the old story of *Mio Amigo* had given him a terror of borrowing. The Armory was nearby. It was clean and cheap. This little decision of choosing the Armory, a result of *Mio Amigo*, too, is the most important so far. . . . The Doctor went with him. The two were hushed and sick with things to say. Nevin felt he was losing the throb of great service; that he could not hold it all after this power-house of a man went his way. It was not only Morning, but Morning was attached to the large, quiet doings and seeings of the stranger named Duke Fallows.

Morning loved the Doctor. Nevin did not tower; Nevin was instantly in his comprehension. Their

throats tightened. . . . Nevin saw him to the light little room, and said as he was leaving:

"I've been all over Chinatown, looking up a formula for that wound that won't heal. It's this—full directions inclosed. You'll have to get settled before you try it out."

He disappeared saying he would be back. Morning put the envelope in a wallet, which he had carried afield. . . . It was not yet two in the afternoon. There was a timorous rap at the door. Morning's head dropped over drowsily. The door opened just a little and a voice said:

"Is there a sick American soldier in here?"

It was low and timorous like the tapping, but there was a laugh in it, and something that drove the wildness out of his heart.

"Yes," he said.

"And may I come in?"

"Yes."

She was slight and young and pale. She passed between the window and his eyes. Her brown hair seemed half-transparent. The day was bright, but not yellow; its soft gray luster was exactly the woman's tone. There was a curious unreality about the whole figure. The light in her eyes was like the light in the window; gray eyes and very deep. So quietly, she came, and the day was quiet, the house—a queer hush everywhere.

"There are a few of us who meet the transports—and call on the sick soldiers. We talk to them—write letters or telegrams. Sometimes they are very glad. All we want is to help. I haven't tried many times before——"

Someone had told him once of a woman in London, who met the human drift in from the far tides of chance—and made their passing or their healing dear as heaven. He had always kept the picture. He scarcely heard all that this young woman was saying.

She was not beautiful, not even pretty. You would see her last in a room full of women. Under her eyes—he could not tell just where—there was a line or shadow of strange charm; and where the corner of her eye-lids folded into the temple a delicate perfection lived; her frail back had a line of beauty—again, he could not describe this. The straightness of the figure was that of lightness, of aspiration. . . . Sometimes she seemed just a girl. Her underlip pursed a little; it was not red. . . . She seemed waiting with the lightness of a thistle—waiting and listening in the lull before a wind.

“My name is Betty Berry.”

“Mine is John Morning.”

She told him that she was a musician, and that San Francisco was her home, although she was much away. He saw her with something that Duke Fallows had given him. The hush deepened with the thought. Had he taken from that tired breast a certain age and clear-eyedness and judgment of the ways of love-women? There might have been reality in this; certainly there was reality in his not having seen a white girl in many months. He was changed; his work done for the moment; he was very tired and hungry for something she brought. . . . “Betty Berry.”

He *was* changed. This Western world was new to him. He seemed old to the East—old, much-traveled, and very weary; here was faith and tenderness and reality. Duke Fallows' city—Duke had strangely intrenched himself here; and this wraith of an angel who came to him ministering! . . . Malice and ambition—reprisal and murder were gone. What a dirty little man he had been—how rotten with self, how furious and unspeakable. Why had he not seen it? Why had he rejected Duke Fallows with his brain and accepted him with his soul? The soul—what queer place in a man is this? Duke Fallows, Lowenkampf—were in and out, and Nevin, even the Ploughman now; and this little gray

hushed spirit of a girl had come straight to his soul. Why could one not always feel these Presences? Would such destroying and malignant hatred return as that for Reeve Kennard last night? Was it because he had been so passionate for self—that until now, (when he was resting and she came), decency, delight, nor vision had been able to break through the deadly self-turned currents? . . . This was like his finer self coming into the room.

“How did you know that boys coming home—need to see you?” he asked. He had to be very careful and arrange what he meant to say briskly and short. Most of his thoughts would not do at all to speak.

“Women know. So many boys come home—like those on the *Sickles* whom one is not allowed to see. I have watched them going out, too. They don’t know why they go. They don’t expect to find a new country, and yet it seems as if they must go and look. And many come home so numbed with loneliness that they have forgotten what they need.”

“Then women know what boys—men are?”

She smiled, and seemed listening—her lips pursed, her eyes like a cloudy dawn, turned from him slightly. What did she hear continually that did not come to him?

“I mean the men,” he added, “whom the world calls its bravest—the gaunt explorers and fighters—do women know what boys they are?”

“I don’t know those whom the world calls its bravest.”

“I think I needed to have you come,” he said, “but I didn’t know it.”

The hush was in the room again. Morning felt like a little boy—and as if she were a child with braids behind. They felt wonderful things, but could only talk sillinesses. . . . There was something different about her every time he looked. It seemed if she were gone;

he could not summon her face to mind. He did not understand it then.

It had grown quite a little darker before they noticed. The far rumble of thunder finally made them see a storm gathering.

"You won't go until it's over?"

"It might be better for me to go now—before it begins."

"Do you live far?"

"Yes."

"Then stay—please."

She drew her chair closer. They tried to tell each other of what they had been, but this didn't prosper. The peculiar thing was that their history seemed to begin from now—all was far and unimportant but this. Morning, moreover, did not mean to spoil the primary idea in her mind of his being an American soldier; though all his recent history impinged upon the one fact that he wasn't. . . . He tried to hold her face in his mind with shut eyes, but it was a forced and unfair picture when mentally dragged there. . . . The thunder increased and the rain.

"Once when I was little," she said, "I was alone in the house when a storm came, and I was so frightened that day—that I never could be since, in just the same way."

Perfect revelation. Something in him wished she were pretty. She was such a shy and shadowy creature. He called to mind the girls he had known—coarse and tawdry lot, poor things. Betty Berry was all that they were not; yet some of them were prettier. He could see their faces quite distinctly, and this startled him, because shutting his eyes from full gaze at this girl, he could not see her twice the same. . . . The weather cleared. They were together in silence for moments at a time. She became more and more like a wraith when the natural dusk thickened.

"Was it hard for you to knock and speak—that first moment?"

"Yes."

"Do—do any of the soldiers ever misunderstand?"

"No——"

"That's fine of them," he granted.

"They couldn't when one has no thought, only to be kind to them——"

"You think they see that at once?"

"They must."

"A man doesn't know all about soldiers simply because he 'soldiers' with them," Morning said.

"And then——"

"Yes——"

"They look at me and it's very plain that I come just to be good to them. . . . They think of me in the same way as a Salvation Army lassie or a missionary——"

"Now, that's queer," said he. "It didn't occur to me at all. It would never come to me to ask you to leave a tract."

"And I didn't feel like a missionary, either. . . . Now it's all cleared again. I must go."

There was a pang. . . . Where was Nevin? Why had Noyes or someone from the *Western States* not come to him? Coming back to these things pained. . . . A boy in the halls called the afternoon papers in a modified voice.

"Will you get me the papers—especially the *Western States*?"

She hurried to call the boy. He saw the huge picture of Duke Fallows on the sheet toward him, as she re-entered.

"This is what I want," he said hoarsely, taking the *Western States*. . . .

"John Morning," she whispered.

In inch letters across the top—there it was:



## JOHN MORNING BRINGS IN THE FIRST FALLOWS STORY.

Full Day Ahead of *Coptic Mails*. . . . Morning Leaves Fallows on the Field Beyond Liaoyang, Night of September 3rd. . . . Two Americans Alone See Great Battle. . . . The Incomparable Fallows' Story Printed in Full in the *Western States To-day*. . . . John Morning's Detail Picture—a Book in Itself—Begins in the *Western States To-morrow*—Biggest Newspaper Feature of the Year's Campaign. . . . Read To-day How John Morning Brought in the News—a Story of Unparalleled Daring and Superhuman Endurance. . . .

Such was the head and the big-print captions. Morning's riding forth from Liaoyang on the night of the third—the sorrel mare—the Hun Crossing—the Liao Crossing and the fight with the river-bandits—the runaway of the sorrel and her broken heart—his journey dazed and delirious, covered with wounds, thirty miles to Koupangtse—Tongu—the battle to get aboard the *Sickles*, first, second, and third attempts—redoing the great story on shipboard—all this in form of an interview and printed as a local story, ran ahead of the Duke Fallows article.

A great moment, and John Morning, forgetting all else, even forgetting the girl who glanced at him with awed and troubled eyes, held hard for a moment to the one realization: Noyes would not have printed, "Begins in the *Western States to-morrow*," had he not arranged for publication in Reever Kennard's *World-News*. . . .

Her chair was farther away. She waited for him—as one expecting to be called. He turned; their eyes met full.

"You are not an American soldier——"

"I am an American. I have had a hard time, almost as hard as any soldier could——"

"I wouldn't have come—the whole city will serve you——"

"That's why I didn't speak. No soldier could have gotten more good."

Her eyes turned downward. The room was almost dark. A knock at the door.

"I must go——"

He held out his hand. "Won't you come again?"

"It doesn't seem——"

He would not let her hand go. "Oh, won't you come again?"

"Yes."

"Thank you."

Betty Berry opened the door for Noyes and another, and she passed out.

## 21

NOYES said lightly:

"The young lady doesn't need to go on our account——"

"But she's gone," Morning muttered. The walls gave him back the words.

"If it's any interest to you, Morning, I've followed directions in your letter," the editor said presently.

"The *World-News*——"

"That's what I waited for—before coming here. They're using Field's local story to-morrow morning. It's on the wire to them now. This is Field."

"I had the pleasure of bringing in your manuscript from the *Sickles* rather early this morning," said the latter. "Also I did the story that Doctor Nevin told me."

"I wish he would come," said Morning.

"Nevin?"

"Yes."

"He's on his toes where you are concerned," said Field.

"He has done much for me——"

"Friend Fallows is rather strong for you, too, I should say," Noyes offered.

He was a pale, soft, middle-aged man who gave the impression of being more forceful than he looked.

"I owe everything to him," said Morning.

"By the way, Morning, what were you mad at, when you wrote that letter of directions to me? I followed it carefully as you said—price—*World-News*—everything. We'll have a lot of other papers beside the *World-News*—but that letter made me hot under the collar every time I glanced at it——"

"I was just about to break. I was very sick of words. Every sentence was like drawing a rusty chain in one ear and out the other."

"Of course you know you've got the world by the tail on this Russian end—this Liaoyang story," Noyes observed.

"I've written the story. The big part of the copy is here for you."

"You're not going to quit now. Are you down and out physically?"

"No."

"Why, Morning," Field broke in, "you ought to make ten thousand dollars in the next thirty days. You've got a big feature for every magazine in America—and then the book."

"The chance doesn't come but once in a life time—and then only to God's chosen few, who work like hell," said Noyes, and he sat back to review this particularly finished remark.

"What would you do?" Morning asked.

"I'd start for New York to-night. Field's story about you—the one we run to-night at the head of Fallows'

story—will start the game. A couple of installments of your big yarn will have appeared in the *World-News* when you reach New York. If it ends as good as it begins, you'll have the big town groggy within a week. You'll receive the magazine editors in your hotel, contract to furnish so much—and talk off same to expert typists. That's the way things are done. You've got the goods. New York serves a man like that. It's nothing to me, but I know the game—even if I never cornered a Liaoyang story. Fallows said you have done more work for less money than any man in America. He's one of our owners——”

So Noyes rambled on; Field breaking in with fresh and timely zest. Morning had not looked beyond the main story. He saw separate articles now in every phase. It would work out. . . . Four days of rest—looking out of the car-window. He would land in New York once and for all—land hard—do it all at once. Then he would rest. . . . He was seething again. . . . With this advantage he could break into the markets that would stand aloof from his ordinary product for years. All day his devil had slept, and now was awake for rough play in the dusk. His dreams organized—the big markets—breaking out of the newspapers into the famous publications! He had the stuff. It would be as Noyes said. He would have thought of it for another man.

“How soon can I start?” he said.

“Four or five hours.”

“I'm obliged to you. . . . Fallows seems still with me,” he said strangely. . . . “I must see Nevin——”

There was a ringing in his brain at some unused door, but he did not answer. He was driven again. Harrowing the idea of waiting a single day . . . in these modern hours when world-events are so swiftly forgotten.

Everything was settled. Morning was taken from place to place in a cab. Noyes not only was conscientious about seeing to every detail for Friend Fallows—but he made it very clear that he was not accustomed to spend his evenings down-town. From time to time, he dropped hints of what he would be doing at home at this hour. Down-town nights were all put away for him, he declared.

The balance of the manuscript was locked in the safe at the *Western States* to be set up to-morrow, and proofs sent out. The second and possibly third installments of the story would go to the *World-News* by telegraph, the rest follow by mail.

“To-morrow morning, out in the mountains, you’ll have the satisfaction of knowing that New York is reading Field’s story which we ran to-day. Is that stuff the Doctor gave us, right, Morning?”

“Huh?”

“Did you dream about that sorrel mare—entrails out—walking like a man—white death in her eyes?” Noyes pursued.

“God, I wonder if I did? Did I dream that I did the big story twice?—”

He was in pain; there was lameness in his mind at being driven again. He wished Noyes would go home. . . . Messengers were back and forth to the *Sickles* trying to get Nevin. Transportation to New York was the newspaper’s affair; when it was handed him, something went from Morning that he could not get again. There was much to drink. Noyes had put all this from him so long that he found the novelty humorous—and yet, what a bore it was after all! Field was a steaming geyser of enthusiasms. Both talked. Others talked. Morning was sick with words. He had not had words drummed into his brain in so long. He half-realized that his impatience for all these things was disgust at himself, but all his past years, and their one-pointed aim

held him now. This was his great chance. . . . He wanted Nevin.

These city men gave him everything, and disappointed him. Had he been forced to battle with them for markets; had he been forced to accept the simple column rate, he could not have seen them as now. Because they had become his servants, he touched their weakness. And what giants he had known—Fallows and Nevin—and Endicott, the little Englishman at Tongu. . . . You must answer a man's need when that need is desperate—to make a heart-hold. A man makes his friends before his world capitulates.

He was waiting in the bar of the *Polander*. . . . Nevin had not been found. Morning was clothed, expensed; his order upon New York for the price of the story would not be touched until he reached there. He had won already; he had the world by the tail. . . . Nevin did not come. There was no bite in the drink for Morning. He was in pain; others made a night of it. He struggled in the pits of self, that sleepless, never-forgetting self. There was a calling, a calling deep within, but the outer noise spoiled the meaning. Men drank with single aim; they drank like Russian officers—to get drunk. They were drunk; all was rich and free. Noyes knew many whom he saw every day, and many whom he had seen long ago. He called them forward to meet Morning, who had brought in the story. . . . Morning who knew Duke Fallows—Morning who had the big story of the year, beginning to-morrow. . . . And always when they passed, Noyes remarked that the down-town stuff was silly as the devil. White and clerical, his oaths were effective. He drank hard and well as men go. Field drank well—his impulses becoming more gusty, but not evil. . . . Once Morning would have called this a night of triumph. Every one looked at him—talked respectfully—whispered, pointed. . . . Twenty minutes left—the crowd grew denser in the

*Polander* bar. There was a voice in the arch to the hotel. Ferry entered in the midst of men. He was talking high, his eyes dancing madly.

"Why, the son of . . . threw me—that's all. He's done with the *Sickles*. . . . Who? Why, Nevin, the squint-eyed son of a . . . He threw me. . . . I thought this Morning was some drunken remittance man wanting passage. Reeve Kennard said he was a thief. . . . Nevin might have come to me. . . . Why, Morning didn't even pay his commutation for rations——"

"I would have mailed it to you, Ferry—except for this meeting," said Morning, his voice raised a little to carry.

An important moment to him, and one of the strangest of his life. This was the man whom he had dreamed of murdering, the man who had made him suffer as only the gods should make men suffer. And yet Ferry was like an unpleasant child; and Morning, troubled by greater things, had no hate now, no time nor inclination to hate. The face that had seemed dark and pitiless on the deck in Nagasaki harbor—was only weak and undone—an unpleasant child crying, refusing to be quieted—an annoyance to the house. Such was the devil of the *Sickles*, the man who had stood between him and America, the man who had tried to make him miss beating the *Coptic* mails. . . . They faced each other, the quartermaster, wincing and shrunken.

"I had to get across, Ferry. I was too sick to make you see. Kennard always says that. He seems to know that best—but it isn't true. . . . I was bad to look at. You see, I had come a long way. I was off my head and eyes——"

"I didn't know," Ferry blurted, "and now Nevin has thrown me. I wasn't supposed to take civilians——"

"I know it—only I had to get across. . . . I don't know what I'd have done but for Nevin. He was

mother and father on the voyage. I can give you the commutation now——”

“You were a stowaway——”

“That’s what made it delicate to pay for the passage——”

Ferry was broken-nerved. He suggested buying a drink, as a child who has learned a fancied trick of men.

And Morning drank. Noyes glanced at Field, who had suddenly become pale and anxious with a story—idea. He was at work—drink-clouds shoved back and all the exterior enthusiasm—fresh as after a night’s rest. He was on a new story.

Ferry went away and Morning looked at the clock. Only five minutes of his life had been used in this important transaction. Nevin had not come—Nevin who had lost his berth, thrown over his own work for him. . . . There would be no more *Nevin* on the *Sickles*. Would he come East?

“Oh, I say, Field—drop the Ferry end of the story,” Morning said.

“Sure,” said Field glibly.

“Nothing to it,” said Noyes.

Morning was too tired to go further, though he felt their lie.

“But, Nevin,” he said to Noyes.

“I’ll have him found to-morrow. That’s the big local thing to-morrow.”

“Tell him——”

When Morning stopped telling Noyes and Field what to tell Nevin for him, it was time to go for the ferry. The *Polander* slipped out of Morning’s mind like a dream—smoke, voices, glasses, indecent praise. Noyes reached across the bar for a package. That last seemed quite as important as anything.

They left him at the ferry—these men of the *Western States*—servants of his action and his friends. . . .



And somewhere in the city was little Nevin, who had done his work and who had not come for his pay; somewhere in the city, but apart from voices and adulation—the man who had forgotten himself in telling the story of how the news was brought in. . . . It was all desperately unfinished. It hurt him every moment.

In the Pullman berth he opened the package Noyes had given him; the porter brought a glass. Afterward, he lay in the darkness. It was very still when he had become accustomed to the wheels. The going always had soothed him. In the still train and the peace of the road, he heard at last that ringing again at the new door of his life, and opened to Betty Berry, who had promised to come.



BOOK II  
THE HILL-CABIN



## BOOK II.

# THE HILL-CABIN

### 1

MORNING sat in the yielding leather of the *Boabdil* library, quite as if he had passed his youth in the midst of people who talk of doing things. Liaoyang had been written, even the abandoned impediments of retreat covered. It had all come to pass quite according to the early ideas of Noyes and Field. John Morning was Liaoyang in America. His book *Liaoyang*, magazine and newspaper articles gathered together, was established as important authority in encyclopædic and other reference books. The most captious must grant that living man can do no more than this.

Morning had dined with the president. One after another he had made every magazine of note, and much money. He had done his own story of the journey, which proved more of a comment maker than the battle description; and his article on the deck passages of the Chinese coolies will always be an incentive to foreign missions. New York had waited upon him, had exploited him, given him bewildering payments, and called him everything, even Hugoesque and Tolstoianic. It was very hard for Morning to retain the conviction that there wasn't ten pages of all this copy that ranked in sheer value with the ten pages of Fallows' *Ploughman*. He didn't for awhile.

Liaoyang was on in full magazine blast in America, while Mukden and Sha River were being fought across the world. At this time Morning spent an hour a day,

as war-expert for a particularly incessant daily newspaper of New York. So all people knew what the campaign was about, and what certain generals might do, from past grooves of their wearing in history. Also German gentlemen of military pasts wrote letters disputing the prophecies. Morning had certainly arrived.

The condition or place of arrival was slippery. The peace of Portsmouth had been protocoled. . . . Liaoyang, deep in the valley of desuetude, was without even the interest of perspective. The name, Liaoyang, made the mind of the world lame. . . . Even in the heat of arrival, the thing had puzzled him. Money ceased to gladden him after a few mails; did not spare him from the nearest irritation. Plainly he was quite the same John Morning after appearing in the great magazines as before; and the people whom he had interested were mainly of the same sort that had come forward in the *Polander* bar.

He had been a sick man since the Hun Crossing. When the big New York task was finished, and it was done with something of the same drive of will that characterized the second writing of the main story on board the *Sickles*, he was again ready to break, body and brain. Running down entirely, he had reached that condition which has an aversion to any task. His productive motors had long lain in the dark, covered from the dust. This was the time he clubbed about. The *Boabdil* was a favorite, but even here, men drew up their chairs from time to time, day and night, dispatching the waiter for drink and saying:

"Those Japs are pretty good fighters, aren't they?" or, "What do you consider will become of China in the event of——" or, very cheerily, "Well, Mr. Morning, are you waiting for another war?"

He slept ill; drank a very great deal; the wound in his side had not healed and he had made no great friends.

He thought of these four things on this particular mid-day in the *Boabdil* library. . . . Nearby was old Conrad with the morning papers, summoning the strength to dine. It was usually late in the afternoon, before he arose to the occasion, but with each stimulant, he informed the nearest fellow-member that he was going to eat something presently. The old man stopped reading to think about it. After much conning, he decided that he had better have just one more touch of this with a dash of that—which he took slowly, listening for comment from within. . . . After dinner he would smoke himself to sleep and begin preparing for the following morning's chops. "Eat twice a day, sir—no more—not for years."

Conrad in his life had done one great thing. In war-time, before the high duty was put on, he had accumulated a vast cellar full of whiskey. That had meant his hour. Riches, a half century of rich dinners, clean collars and deep leather chairs—all from that whiskey sale. . . . "Picturesque," they said of Conrad at the *Boabdil*. "What would the club do without him?" . . .

Morning watching him now, remembered an old man who used to sit at a certain table in a Sixth avenue bar. The high price of whiskey had reversed conditions in this case, and a changed collar meant funeral or festivity. Forty years ago this old man had bred a colt that became a champion. That was his hour, his answer for living. After all, Morning concluded, having seen Conrad fall asleep one night, the old horseman was less indecent.

Finally Morning thought of the little Englishman at Tongu and the blanket; then of Fallows and Nevin—Fallows saying, "Come on upstairs," that day of their first meeting at the *Imperial*, and Nevin saying, "Well, you gave me a night—" . . . Morning began to laugh. "Picturesque, what-would-we-do-without Con-

rad"—sitting five days and nights on the deck passage from the mouth of the Pei-ho to the lowest port of Japan. . . .

He hadn't thought much of Nevin and Fallows and the Tongu Endicott in the months that followed his arrival from San Francisco, when the work went with a rush. And Betty Berry—there were times when he was half sure she—name, Armory and all—formed but an added dream that Nevin had injected hypodermically the night before.

Morning could think about all these now. The editors had begun to tell what *they* wanted. He had sent in stuff which did not meet their needs. He was linked to war in their minds. Moreover, plentiful money had brought to the surface again his unfinished passion to gamble, as his present distaste for work had increased the consumption of alcohol. . . . It was *Reverses* that reminded him of Fallows and Nevin and the Tongu blanket and the angel he had entertained in the Armory room.

Editors didn't care for his fiction. "A good war story is all right any time," they said, but apparently his were not, for five or six trials didn't take. He had a tendency to remember Fallows when he wrote fiction. The story of the Ploughman came curiously back to mind, when he was turned loose from straight narrative, and he was "balled" between planes. . . . He thought of a play. . . .

Varce now came into the library and drew up a chair. Varce had one of his stories; Varce edited a magazine that sold several million every two weeks. Long ago, with great effort, and by paying prodigiously, Varce had secured from Morning one of the final tiles of the great Liaoyang mosaic. . . . Varce was tall, a girl's dream of poet-knight—black, wavy hair, straight excellent features, a figure lean enough for modern clothes.



"Morning," he said, "do you know the fighting game?"

"You mean pugilistically?"

"Yes."

"I used to do fights."

Varce went on presently:

"A great series of articles is to be written on the boyhood and general atmosphere of the men who have made great ring history—big stuff, you know—well written—from a man who can see the natural phenomena of these bruisers—how they are bred and all that. Now three things go into the fighter—punch, endurance, but, most of all, instinct—the stuff that doesn't let him 'lay down' when the going is rough, and doesn't keep him from putting the wallop on a groggy opponent. Many a good fighter has missed championship because he was too tender-hearted to knock-out a helpless——"

"Do you like that story of mine you have, Varce?" Morning asked yawning.

"Oh, it's a good enough story—a bit socialistic—what are you trying to get at?"

"No need of me furnishing diagrams, if the manuscript leaves you that way," Morning said. "You were just saying about the last touch to a beating—yes, I've heard about those three things——"

"Do you want the series?"

"No, I'm doing a play."

. . . After Varce had gone, Morning thought it all out again. Varce was living a particularly unmitigated lie. Five years ago he had done some decent verse. He had a touch of the real poetic vision, and he had turned it to trade. He was using it now to catch the crowd. An especially sensational prostitution, this—one that would make the devil scratch his head. . . . And Varce could do without him. Liaoyang had not made the name of John Morning imperative. Moreover, he himself was living rotten. He wished he had told Varce

what he thought of him and his multi-millionaire subscription. . . . He hadn't; he had merely spoken of his play. The bridges were not burned behind him. He might be very glad to do a series of "pug" stories for Varce. There were good stories in these fighters—but the good stories, as he saw them, were not what Varce saw in the assignment.

It summed up that he was just beginning over again; that he must beat the game all over again in a different and larger dimension—or else quit. . . . He ordered a drink. . . . He could always see himself. That was a Morning faculty, the literary third eye. He saw himself doing a series of the fighters—saw it even to the red of the magazine covers, and the stuff of the announcements. . . . John Morning, the man who did fifty-mile fronts at Liaoyang, putting all his unparalleled battle color in the action of a 24-foot ring. Then the challenge to the reader: "Can you stand a descriptive force of this calibre? If you can, read the story of the great battle between Ambi Viles and Two-pill Terry in next issue." . . . He would have to tell seriously before the battle description, however, how Ambi was a perfect gentleman and the sole support of his mother, an almost human English gentlewoman. It is well to be orthodox.

Somebody spoke of whiskey in the far end of the library, insisting on a certain whiskey, and old Conrad cocked up his ears out of a meaty dream. . . . Morning closed his eyes. He felt the warmth of a ship beneath, the drive of the cold rain on deck and the heaving of the sea. There was something almost sterile-clean about that deck-passage, compared to this. . . . Then he remembered again the men he had known, and the woman who came to the Armory room—and the long breath his soul took, with her coming. . . . Finally he saw himself years hence, as if he had quit the fight now and taken New York and Varce as they

meant to use him. . . . He was sunk in leather, blown up like an inner tube and showing red, stalled in some club library, and forcing the world to remember Liaoyang, bringing down the encyclopædia to show his name, when extra drunk. . . . No, he would be hanging precariously to some porter job on Sixth avenue, trying to make the worn and tattered edges of his world believe how he had once carried the news from Liaoyang to Koupangtse. . . .

A saddle-horse racked by on the asphalt, and turned into the park. Morning arose. There was stabbing and scalding from the unhealed wound in his side. The pain reminded him of the giants he had once known and of the woman who came to the Armory room. It had always been so; always something about him unsound, something that would not heal. He had accepted eagerly, but ever his giving had been paltry. And he had to be pulled down, out of the shine of fortune, before he remembered how great other men had been to him.

## 2

**T**HAT night he dreamed that he had passed through death. . . . He was standing upon a cliff, between the Roaming Country and a valley of living earth. He did not want the spirit region; in his dream he turned his back upon it. He did not want the stars. Illusion or not, he wanted the earth. He looked down upon it through the summer night, down through the tree-tops into a valley that lay in the soft warm dusk. He watched with the passion and longing of a newly-dead mother, who hears her child crying for her, and senses the desolation of her mate. . . . The breath of earth came up to him through the exhaling leaves—leaves that whispered in the mist. He could have kissed the soil below for sheer love of it. He wanted the cool, damp earth in his hands, and the thick leaf-mould under

his feet, and the calm wide listening of the trees. . . . Stars were near enough, but earth was not. He wanted to be down, down in the drip of the night. He would wait in ardor for the rain of the valley. . . . Looking down through the tree-tops, he sensed the earth passion, the lovely sadness of it—and desired it, even if he must die again. . . . There was an ache in the desire—like the ache of thirst that puts all other thoughts away, and turns the dream and the picture to running water.

He awoke, and went to his window in the dark. He saw New York and realized that he was dying for the country. His eyes smarted to tears, when he remembered rides and journeys and walks he had taken over the earth, so thoughtlessly, without knowing their boon and beauty and privilege. . . . While he was standing there, that which he had conceived as To-morrow, became To-day, and appeared over the rim of the opposite gorge of apartments. The first light of it sank far down into the tarry stuffiness of the pavement, but the dew that fell with the dawn-light was pure as heaven to his nostrils.

That day he crossed the river, and at the end of a car-line beyond Hackensack, walked for a half-hour. It was thus that Morning found his hill. Just a lifted corner of a broad meadow, with a mixed company of fine trees atop. He bought it before dusk. The dairyman's farmhouse was a quarter-mile distant; the road, a hundred and fifty yards from the crest of the hill, with trees thinly intervening. The south was open to even wider fields; in the far distance to the west across the meadows, the sky was sharpened by a low ribbon of woods and hill-land. In the east was the suspended silence of the Hudson.

"I want a pump and a cabin, and possibly a shed for a horse," he said, drinking a glass of buttermilk, at the dairyman's door.

He was directed to Hackensack.

With the falling darkness again upon the hills, he saw that certain crowded, mid-growth trees were better down. The fine thought of building his cabin of them occurred. By the time he reached Hackensack, the house of logs was so dear in thought, that he wanted nothing short of a cabinet-joiner for such a precious task. That night he met Jake Robin, who was sick of nailing at houses in rows, a job that had long since ceased to afford deep breaths to his capacity.

The next day Morning moved to Hackensack, and Jake was at work. . . . Three thousand he had lost gambling . . . he wished he had it now. Much more had been lost, and not so cleanly, in reaching the final *Boabdil* realization, but he had enough. Presently he was helping Jake, and there was joy in it.

They tapped a spring some thirty feet beneath the humped shoulder of the hill; built a shed for the horse he had not yet found, and then fitted the cabin to the fire-place of concrete and valley stone. One sizeable room it was, that faced the open south from the brow of the hill.

A fine unfolding—this love of Morning's for wood itself, and woods. Over a half-hundred trees were his own—elm, beech, hickory, oak, ash, and maple—and like a fine clean colony of idealists they stood meditating. . . . One never knows the quality of wood until one builds his own house. Opening the timbers for the big mortices—each was a fresh and fragrant discovery. Jake and he lingered long, after the cabin was roofed, over the heavy oak flooring, and the finishing of windows and doors and frames. They built some furniture together of hickory, which is a wood a man should handle with reverence, for it is fine in its way as wheat and grapes and honey and wild olives. Hickory answers graciously to the work of the hand, and, like a good dog, flourishes with men. . . . They built a table and

bed-frame and a chest of drawers; and Morning at last went to Hackensack for pots, kettles, and tea things. Jake Robin, like one who has built a ship, was loath to leave without trying the cabin. Morning kept him busy in the clearing, long after he was in the mood to start work on the play. There was a platform to build for the pump; also a certain rustic bench. The shed needed tinkering; an extra cabinet for books was indispensable—and screens. . . . No one had ever let Jake play before in his life. . . . Moreover, he was paid for the extra hour required to walk to and from town. All Hack heard about it.

“You’ll need a chicken-coop——”

“No,” said Morning. The look on Jake’s face was like old Amoya’s in Tokyo, when the rickshaw-runner was forbidden to take him to the Yoshuwara.

“I can fit you up a little ice-box near the spring—so’s you’ll pump it full of water, and keep your vittles——”

Morning wanted the stillness for the play, but he couldn’t refuse. Two days more. Then Jake scratched his head.

“You’ll be wantin’ a vine on the cabin,” he ventured. “I know the man who has the little ivies.”

This was irresistible. “Can you see me owning a vine?” asked Morning. Yet there was significance in the idea together with the play.

“And I’ll build a bit of a trainer to start it. By the end of summer——”

“Bring it on, Jake——”

“An’ I’ll fetch a couple of rose vines, and dreen them with broken crockery from the holler——”

The vine prospered and the play; and the roses began to feel for Jake’s trellis. The tool-box was still there.

“You’ll be needin’ fire-wood for the winter. To be sure, you can buy it, but what’s the good, with dead stuff to be knocked down and small trees to be thinned out, and the shed gapin’ open for the saddle-horse you’re not

sure of findin'? It's wood you ought to have in there——"

In fact, it was no small task to break Jake of the hill-habit. Morning grew accustomed to the ax, and the crashing of branches, many of which would have been sacrificed to the strong winds of the Fall. Meanwhile, the shed had come into its own, and there were piles of firewood seasoning in the sun and shade.

He was alone with the nights; sitting there in his doorway when it was fine, studying the far lights of the city. . . . City lights meant Varce and Conrad, not his great friends. Every hour that he looked, he liked better the wind about the doorway and the open southern fields.

One night he felt his first twinge of sorrow for the big city. Hatred, it had been before. Other men were tortured as he had been, but somehow, the way didn't get into their dreams and drive them forth, as he had been driven. They were really not to blame for *Boabdilling*; they sank into the cushions and lost the sense of reality. And then the thousands in the hall-bedrooms and worse, to whom *Boabdil* was heaven's farthest pavilion! Morning seemed to have something to say to those thousands, but wasn't ready yet.

He longed for Fallows, whom he saw more clearly every day—especially since the *Ploughman* had crept into the play. . . . He wanted to wait upon the big sick man; to have him here, to prepare food for him, and sit with him in these silences. He wanted Endicott at Tongu, too, and Nevin—oh, yes, Nevin. It was like a prayer that he sent out some nights—for the unearthing of these giants from their hiding—so that he could listen to them, and serve them and make them glad for their giving to him.

A deep summer night. The purple of the north seemed washed and thinned in ether, (nothing else could

bring out the heavenly lustre of it), and the black, fragile top-foliage of the woods leaned against it, listening, feminine. Darkness only on the ground; yet he loved it, the heart of the dusk that throbbed there. He loved the earth and the water that mingled in the hollows. He breathed with strange delight the air that brushed the grass and the clover-scent that came to him around the hill. . . . And this was the momentary passion—that he was going from all this. He loved it as one who was passing beyond. It was like the dream after all. Just as Mother Earth was unfolding, he was called. She was like a woman long lived-with, but unknown, until the sudden revelation of parting. . . . He touched the stones with his hand.

In the hush, waiting for a katydid to answer, that night, Morning fell asleep. . . . He had climbed to his cabin, as if it were a room on an upper floor. Before he opened the door, he knew someone was within. Before the light, it was clear that someone was curled up asleep on the foot of his hard bed. . . . Yes, it was she who had restored his soul, that day at the Armory—and there she lay sleeping. . . . He did not call her, as he had called Moto-san; there was no thought to waken her, for everything was so pure and lovely about it. He stood there, and watched her gratefully—it seemed a long time—until the katydid answered.

## 3

**A**FTER Markheim had kept the play three months—it was now November—Morning crossed to the city to force the decision. The producer was prevailed upon to see him.

“It will be read once more,” said Markheim. “It will go or not. We like it, but we are afraid of it. Tomorrow we will know or not.”



"What are you afraid of?"

"I don't know. I do not read plays."

"To-morrow?"

"Yes."

Markheim bought his opinions, and was attentive to those which cost the most. . . .

Morning drew a napkin the size of a doll's handkerchief from a pile. A plate of eggs and bacon rung, as if hitting a bull's-eye upon the white marble before him. He was still wondering what Markheim was afraid of. He didn't like the feel of it. The Lowenkampf of Duke Fallows' had crept into the play—Lowenkampf, whose heart was pulled across the world by the mother and child. How they had broken his concentration on the eve of the great battle.

At the time, he had seen the tragic sentimentalist as one caught in a master weakness, but all that was gone. Lowenkampf still moved white in his fancy, while the other generals, even Mergenthaler, had become like the dim mounds in his little woodland. . . . And what a dramatic thing, to have a woman and a child breaking in upon the poised force of a vast Russian army. It was like Judith going down into the valley-camp of the Assyrians and smiting the neck of Holofernes with his own fauchion. Morning's mind trailed away in the fascination of Fallows, and in the dimension he had been unable to grasp in those black hours of blood. . . . So many things were different after this summer alone; yet he had never seemed quite rested, neither in mind nor body. . . . He had been all but unkillable like the sorrel Eve before that journey from Liaoyang to New York. Now, even after the ease and moral healing of the summer alone, his wound was unhealed. . . .

The telephone-miss in Markheim's reception-room was very busy when he called the next afternoon. . . . Something about her reminded him of *Mio*

*Amigo*. She was a good deal sharper. Was it the brass handle? . . . To hear her, one would think that she had come in late, and that New York needed scolding, even spanking, which exigencies of time and space deferred for the present. Her words were like the 'spat, spat, spat,' of a spanking. . . . She was like an angry robin, too, at one end of a worm. She bent and pulled, but the worm had a strangle-hold on a stone. It gave, but would not break. . . . Morning saw the manuscript at this point on her side-table, and the fun of the thing was done. . . . She looked up, trailed a soft *arpeggio* on the lower-right of her board, grasped the manuscript firmly, and shoved it to him.

"Mr. Morning to see Mr. Markheim," he said.

"Mr. Markheim is——"

But the husky voice of the producer just now reached them from within.

"Busy——" she finished with a cough. . . . New York was at it again. *Stuyvesant* especially had a devil, and *Bryant* was the last word.

". . . You can't see Mr. Markheim. This is your message——"

"Oh, it really isn't. This is just an incident. I hesitate to trouble you, but I must see Mr. Markheim."

The play was wrapped in the identical paper in which it had been brought.

She must have touched something, for a boy came in—a younger brother, past doubt—but so bewildered, as to have become habitually staring.

"Tell Mr. Markheim, Mr. Morning insists on seeing him."

The boy seemed on the point of falling to his knees to beg for mercy. Morning's personal distemper subsided. Here was a drama, too—the great American stage. . . . One word came out to him from Markheim:

"In-zists!"

"How do you do, Mr. Morning—good afternoon."

Markheim had his hand in a near drawer, and was smiling with something the same expression that old Conrad used when listening for the dinner notice.

"You see we do not want it—we are afraid," he began, and becoming suddenly hopeful, since Morning drew forth no bomb, he added, "You have a girl's idea of war, Mr. Morning—good afternoon."

He liked his joke on the name. "We were in doubt about the war part—afraid—and so we consulted an expert—one who was on the spot," he said pleasantly.

Morning's mind was searching New York; his idea was fateful.

"We are not bermitted to divulge who the expert is, but we did not spare money——"

Morning's eye was held to the desk over the shoulder of Markheim, to a large square envelope, eminent in blue, upon the corner of which was the name "Reever Kennard."

"I'm sure you did not. He was always a high-priced man," he said idly. . . . And so this was the long-delayed answer to his appearance in the *World-News* to the extent of eighty thousand words. He had heard that Mr. Reever Kennard was back on finance and politics. . . . Markheim had not followed his mind nor caught the sentence. Morning passed out through the hush. He paused at the door to give the office-boy a present—a goodly present to be divided with the sister, just now occupied with a fresh outbreak of obstreperousness on the part of *Gramercy*.

Morning had moments of something like the old rage; but the extreme naturalness of the thing, and its touch of humor, helped him over for the next hour or so. Apparently, the opportunity had fallen into the lap of Mr. Reever Kennard; come to him with homing familiarity. The war-expert had spoken, not as one

offering his values gratuitously, but as one called and richly paid. Morning reflected that the summer alone on his hill must have subdued him. As a matter of fact, he was doubtful about the play; not because Markheim was afraid; not by any means because Mr. Reeve Kennard had spoken, but because it had not come easily, and the three incidents which made the three acts did not stand up in his mind as the exact trinity for the integration of results. But one cannot finally judge his own work.

He wandered straight east from that particular theatre of Markheim's where the offices were and passed Fourth Avenue. He never went quite that way again, but remembered that there was an iron picket-fence of an old residence to lean against; and at the corner of it, nearer town, the sidewalk sank into a smoky passage where lobsters, chops, and a fowl or two were tossed together in front. It was all but dark. He was averse to taking his present mood across the river. It wasn't fair to the cabin. *Mio Amigo* recurred queerly and often to mind. . . .

"Look—there's Mr. Morning——"

"Sh-sh—oh, Charley—sh-sh!"

Morning was compelled. Could this little shrinking creature, beside whom the under-sized brother now appeared hulking, be the same who had bossed Manhattan to a peak in his presence such a little while ago? She seemed terrified, all pointed for escape, sick from the strain of the street.

"Why, hello!" Morning said.

She pulled her brother on, saying with furious effort of will, "I'm sure we're much obliged for your present——"

"I had forgotten that," Morning said.

"We're going to take in the show," the boy remarked, drawing back. At large, thus, he was much better to look upon.

"Come on, Charley—we mustn't detain——"

Morning had an idea, and looked at the sister as he said, "Won't you have supper with me somewhere? I have nothing——"

Her face was livid—as if all the fears of a lifetime had culminated into the dreadful impendings of this moment. She tried to speak. . . . Then it came to Morning in a belated way that she thought she was accosted; that she connected his gift with this meeting. He couldn't let her go now—and yet, it was hard for him to know what to say.

"I mean we three," he began hastily. "This play being refused rather knocked me out, and I didn't know what to do with the evening. I don't live in New York, you know. I thought you and your brother—that we might have supper together——"

He spoke on desperately, trying to stir to life the little magpie sharpness again. It was more to her brother she yielded. New York must have frightened her terribly. . . . Morning managed to get down to the pair that night. He was clumsy at it, however, for it was a new emprise. Mostly John Morning had been wrapped and sealed in his own ideas. The boy was won with the first tales of war, but the sister remained apart with her terrors. No one had taught her that kindness may be a motive in itself.

And now Morning was coping with what seemed a real idea: What was the quality of the switch-board that harnessed her character? Here she was wild and disordered—like a creature denied her drug. With that mystic rumble of angry New York in her ears—the essential buzz of a million desires passing through her—she was a force, a flying and valuable force. Was she lain open to obsession now because she was removed from that slavery? Was that maddening vibration the lost key to her poise?

He tried hard, not daring to be attentive in the least.

She would have fled, if he had. He was boyishly kind to her brother. That awed, and was beginning to hold her.

Morning saw clearly that she stood like a stretched wing between her brother's little soul and the world. She could be brave in sheltering Charley. The boy was really alive. He ate and answered and listened and lived, the show ahead. . . . In the midst of it, Morning awoke to the fact that he was having a good time; and here was the mystery—with the last two people in New York he would have chosen; a two, his whole life-business had taught him to employ thoughtlessly, as other metropolitan adjuncts—pavements, elevators, messengers. Here was life in all its terror and complication, the same struggles he had known; yet he had always seen himself as a sort of Titan alone in the great destroying elements. The joke was on him.

Charley left them for just a moment. The sister said, as if thinking aloud:

“. . . And yet, he cries every morning because he has to go to the office. Oh, he wouldn't go there without me——”

A world of meaning in that. They were sitting in the dark of the *Charity Union* play-house, with Charley between them. The aims and auspices of the performance were still indefinite to Morning, who had not ceased to grapple with his joke—the seriousness with which he had habitually regarded John Morning, his house, his play, his unhealed wound, his moral debility. . . .

For fifteen minutes a giant had marvelously man-handled his companion. The curtain dropped an instant, and in the place where the giant had performed now stood a 'cello and a chair. . . . She came on like the wraith of an angel—and sat down and played. . . . How long she played Morning never knew, but somewhere in it he caught his breath as one who had come back to life. . . . And then she was gone.

The audience was mildly applauding. He turned to the sister leaning on the knees of the boy:

"I know her. She is very dear to me. If you don't mind, I'll leave you now. You are safe with Charley—and some time again I'll come. I thank you very much. I really want to do this again—we three——"

Even though his own joy was bewildering, he saw the sudden happiness of Charley's sister, who, in spite of all, had been haunted by the dread of the *afterward*. Now that was gone from her. Relief was in her face. It was all so much better than she had dared to hope. He had wanted nothing—except to be kind—and now he was going. She gave her hand impulsively. . . . Charley did, too, and was ordered to call a carriage for his sister if he wished; at all events, the means was attended. . . . Then they saw him making his way forward—putting money into the hands of ushers, and inquiring the way to the stage. . . . And she was there, playing again.

## 4

SHE was making the people like her. Her effect was gradual. They had been held by more obvious displays. The instrument seemed very big for her, but the people liked her all the better for this. . . . He could not be one with the audience, but the old watching literary eye—the third eye—caught the sense of the people's growing delight. She made them feel that she belonged to them; as if she said:

"I have come back to you. I will do just what you ask. Everything I have is yours——"

It was different and dearer to John Morning than anything he had ever known. The picture came clearly to him as he walked around behind. . . . This was the hour of her return. She had gone from the hearts

of her people long ago to bring back music. It was the beautiful old story of their sacrifice to send her away. How splendidly she had learned; how thrillingly they remembered her beginnings. And she had never forgotten; she would always love and thank them—indeed, she was happier than any now. . . . Morning was lost for a moment in his story.

She was approaching, but did not see him yet. The house was pleased with her, not noisily, but pleasantly. She turned to bow to the people—and then back toward the wings. She saw him standing there. Her arms went out to him, though she had not quitted the stage. . . . The gesture was new to the people. . . . It was different from her coming to him at the Armory. . . . They were standing together.

“Why don’t you go on again?” a voice said, and with a queer irritation in the tone.

. . . She was playing again—and with dash and power.

Morning had to shut his eyes now, really to hear; and yet, he could not summon her face to mind when his eyes were shut. He thought with a quick burn of shame that he had once wished her prettier. Sadness followed, for, it seemed to him, their meeting had been broken. She belonged to the people and not to him. They loved her. . . . She was different. He saw it now. The audience, so pleased and joyous, lifted her in a way perhaps that he could never do.

It was everywhere—the music. It filled the high, brick-walled stage, vibrated in the spiral stairways, moved mysteriously in the upper darkness and immensity. Behind the far wings a man was moving up and down in a sort of enchantment—no, he was memorizing something. A few of the far front rows were visible from where Morning stood, and the forward boxes opposite. . . .

Morning was wandering in a weird land, a hollow



land. The woman's playing was between him and the world of men; half for them, half for him. The Memorizer was but another phantom, wandering with the ghost of a manuscript. Between Morning and the player was only the frail, fluent current of music. This was a suspense of centuries. . . . Would she go to *Them*, or return to Him? The tall, dim canvases were fields of emptiness and silence, in which he wandered listening, tortured with tension; and the loft was sunless, moonless, unearthly. . . .

The music ceased. He heard the calling of the other world to her. He was apart in the shadows. Would she go to them, or would she remember him, waiting? . . . She was coming. He heard her step behind the wings. It was light as a gloved hand upon a table. He was hungry and athirst and breathless. For the first time he saw that her throat and arms were bare. . . . They were standing together again, but the Other Phantom intercepted.

It was the Memorizing Man. He came forward in an agony of excitement. "You'll have to prompt me," he said to Betty Berry, speaking roughly in his tension. "It's my first time with this new dope. I thought I had it, but I ain't—and there's a barrel of it."

The stage was slightly changed. Morning was thinking how hideous the work of some men. The Phantom was scourged with the fear of one who was to do imperfectly what another had written. The woman had carried a small table and chair to the wings, out of view of the audience and as near as possible to the Memorizer. . . . Morning found something soft and fragrant in his hands. Betty Berry's wrap, which she had given to him before going to the table. And now the monologue had begun. . . . It was to be humorous.

Betty Berry, standing beside the table, raised her eyes from the paper, and beckoned to Morning. His

first thought was that he might disturb her prompting, and he hesitated. She looked up again. Then he thought she might want her wrap. He tiptoed forward and put it around her shoulders.

"It wasn't that," she whispered, her eyes upon the paper. "I wanted you to keep me company. This is long. Sit down."

"Won't *you*—sit down?" he said from behind, very close to her hair.

She shook her head. . . . It was peculiar—she standing, and he in the chair. The soft wrap winged out, and her arm beneath slid across his shoulder; the hollow of her left arm against his cheek. He kissed it, and his face burned against its coolness.

She shivered slightly, but did not take her arm away. Now he looked up into her face—her eyelids drawn, her lips compressed, her gaze steadily held to the manuscript. The Phantom was carried on by the alien humor. Laughter was beginning to crackle here and there through the house. Betty Berry followed with her eyes—just the words.

"I was so glad to find you," Morning whispered.

Her lips moved.

Matters tumbled over each other in his mind to say to her; he was thinking sentences rather than words. He knew that it was not well to talk now, but there seemed so much to say, and so little time. He caught himself promising to give her understanding, and he told her that she seemed everything he wanted to know. His cheek was burning as never before. . . .

The remotest happened. The Phantom faltered in a climax, and covered the difficulty with a trick—awaiting the line from the wings. Betty Berry had become rigid. Her eyes would not see the page.

Morning spoke a sentence in a low, carrying way. He had plucked it from the page painfully near his own eyes. It may be that the Memorizer righted himself, or

that the prompted line was what he needed. Anyway, he was going again, and rising to the end. . . .

The two stood together while the house laughed, recalling the performer.

"Thanks. I caught it fine," the Phantom said hastily. "Not even the front rows knew. I was listening for Miss Berry—and your cue came——"

"It went all right," said Morning.

The other took the manuscript and passed on, rolling a cigarette. . . . For just a moment, the two were alone. Into each other's arms they went, with the superb thoughtlessness of children . . . and then they heard steps and voices. . . . He wondered that Betty Berry could laugh and reply to those who spoke to her. . . . He wanted to escape with her. Never had he wanted anything so much. He was exhausted, humbled, inspired. To be out in the street with her—it seemed almost too good to be. . . . She was saying good-night and good-bye. He followed, carrying the 'cello.

## 5

MORNING remembered that he had thought of her once before as having braids down behind—as if they were boy and girl together, and now it seemed as if they were wandering through some Holland street. He had never been in a Holland street, but the sense of it came to him—as he walked with her, carrying her instrument. His primary instinct was to turn away from the noise of the cars, and where the lights were less glaring. Moreover, now that they were alone, the impulse to say many things had left him.

"We must hurry to the ferry—there is only a few minutes——"

He had known somehow that she was going away

—perhaps from something she had said to the others at the theatre.

“You’re not going way back to—to the Armory?”

“No, to Europe just for a few weeks. I sail tomorrow morning from Baltimore. All we have to do is to catch the ferry and train. I have sleeper-tickets—and berth and all——”

“I’ll—I’ll go across on the ferry with you,” he said huskily.

She felt his suffering by her own, and said:

“My old master is there. I am to meet him—I think in Paris—I shall know when I reach London. There is to be just a few private concerts and some lessons further from him. For two years we’ve planned to do this. I go to Baltimore, because it is cheaper to sail from there——”

“And you’ll be back—when?”

“By the first of March—just a few days over three months——”

He was silent for a time, and then asked: “Do you think this is just like a chance meeting to me—as one meets an old friend in New York?”

“No.”

“I was in a whirl when I saw you,” he said desperately. “It was such a pretty thing, too—the way I happened to come to the theatre . . . and now you’re going away——”

“Yes—yes—but it’s only a little while——”

“Did you know I was here in New York?”

“I knew you had been. I saw your work——”

“But anywhere my work appears—a letter sent in care of the paper or magazine would find me——”

“We—I mean women—do not write that way——”

“I know—I know. . . . But *I* didn’t have anything but the name, ‘Betty Berry’——”

“It seemed that night after I left you at the Armory

everyone was talking about John Morning. And to think I supposed you just a soldier. Everywhere, it was what John Morning had done, and what he had endured—and I had spent the afternoon with you. I started to read that story about your journey, but I couldn't go on. It seemed that I would die before I was half through your sufferings. . . . I would try to think of the things we said, but they didn't come back. I couldn't rest. I was glad you asked me to come again. I could hardly wait for the morning—to go back to the Armory——”

He had no answer. They were in a cross-town car.

“But I think I understand. We won't say anything of that again. . . .”

“You went back to the Armory that next morning?”

“Yes——”

“Oh, but I wasn't ready,” he said at last, as if goaded by pain. “I had so much to learn. Why, I had to learn this—how little this means——”

He pointed out of the windows to the city streets.

“You mean New York?”

“Yes——”

“It really seems as if men must learn that, first of all. You have done well to learn so soon.”

“It's so different now. I must have been half-unconscious that day when you came. You were like an angel. I didn't know until afterward what it really meant to me. . . . You remember the men who came—newspaper men? They showed me what I could do in New York—how I could make the magazines and the big markets. I was knocked-out. You must see it—all I wanted to do in coming years—to make what seemed the real literary markets—all was to be done in a few weeks. . . . It was not until I was on the train that night that I remembered you were a living woman, and had come to me. . . . Then I didn't know what to

do. . . . But ever since I have thought of that afternoon, every day. . . .”

They boarded the ferry and moved away from the rest of the people.

“I hate to have you go,” he said. The words were wrung from him. They were such poor and common words, but his every process of thought repeated them. He looked back the years, and found a single afternoon in the midst of passionate waste—the single afternoon in which she came. . . . She was everything to him. He wanted to go on and on this way, carrying her 'cello. He could ask no more than to have her beside him. He had learned the rest—it was trash and suffering. He wanted to tell her all he knew—not in the tension of this momentary parting—but during days and years, to tell his story and have her sanction upon what was done, and to be done. She was dear; peace was with her. . . . She would tell him all that was mysterious; together they would be One Who Knew. Together they would work—do the things that counted, and learn faith. . . .

She took the 'cello from him, so that he could carry to the Pullman her large case checked in the Jersey station. . . . It was very quiet and dark in the coach. All the berths were made up but one, in which they sat down. . . . They were alone. It was perfect.

“I can't go back now. I'll go on with you to Trenton. . . . I have thought so much of meeting you. . . . When the men came that day to the Armory they showed me everything that seemed good then—fame and money waiting in New York. It seemed that it couldn't wait another day—that I must go that night. . . . When the train started (it was like this in Oakland) I thought of you—of you, back in 'Frisco and coming to the Armory in the morning. It broke me. But I wasn't right—not normal. I had worked like a madman—wounds and all. I worked like a madman in New York——”

She put her hand on his. Her listening centered him. That was it—as if he had not been whirling true before. . . . Her hand, her listening, and he was himself—eager to give her all that was real.

“It’s so good to have you here,” she said in a low, satisfied way. “Will you be able to get a train back all right?”

“Yes.” Now he thought of Charley and his sister.

“It was such a good little thing that brought me to you,” he said. “One of the little things that I never thought of before,” he told her hurriedly.

“They are very wonderful—those little things, as you call them. . . . A person is so safe in doing them——”

“I must tell Duke Fallows about that,” he added. “About that word ‘safe,’ as you just said it. . . . Did you read his story?”

“About the *Ploughman*?”

“Yes.”

“Oh, it was wonderful!” Betty Berry said. “He made me see it. It was almost worth a war to make people see that——”

She stopped strangely. He was bending close, watching her.

“Do you know you are a love-woman?”

“You mean something different?” she asked queerly.

“I mean you are everything—don’t you see? You know everything at once that I have to get bruised and tortured to know. And when you are here, I know where I am. It’s different from any kind of resting to be here with you. It’s kind of being made over. And then you are so—tender——”

“You make the tears come, John Morning.”

Now, it was very dark where they were; the real silences began. He knew the most wonderful thing about her—her listening. . . . Sometimes, she seemed hardly there. Sometimes the love for her and

the sweet quality of it all—shut his throat, and he stared away in the dark. It came to him that Betty Berry—left to herself—would be infallible. She might do wrong, through the will of someone else, but her own impulses were unerringly right. There was delicacy, perhaps, from the long summer alone, in this sense that he must not impose his will. She would be unable to refuse anything possible. If ever Betty Berry were forced to refuse anything he asked, they would never be the same together. And so he studied her. Her nature was like something that enfolded. It was like an atmosphere—his own element.

“Betty——”

“Yes.”

“Betty——”

“Yes——”

And then she laughed and kissed him. He was saying her name in the very hush of contemplation; so real that the name was all. . . .

## 6

THE Pullman conductor passing through after Trenton gave Morning further passage, and moved on with a smile. A wonderful old darkey was the porter, very huge, past seventy, with a voice purringly kind, and the genial deference of the Old South. Morning was thinking there couldn't be better hands in which to leave the Betty Berry. . . . Fifteen minutes at Philadelphia; they hurried out for a cup of coffee. As one of the big station clocks marked the minutes, Morning felt havoc with a new and different force.

“I can't go back now,” he said.

“You look so tired—the long night journey back——” she faltered.

“Would you like to have me go farther—to Wilmington—to Baltimore?”



"Oh, yes."

"And you won't mind staying up?"

Betty Berry covered her eyes. . . . "I never rested in quite the same way as to-night," she said. "It has been happy—so happy, unexpected. I shall have nine days at sea to think of it—to play and think of it, moment by moment."

"I'll go with you clear through to the ship then."

The clock ceased its torment.

"Have you plenty of money to get back—and all?"

"Yes."

"Are you sure—because I could loan you some?"

He told her again, but the thought held a comradeship that gripped him. It happened that he was plentifully supplied; though he would have walked back rather than confess otherwise—a peculiar stupidity. The beaming of the old porter made the moment at the steps of the coach so fine, Morning found himself explaining:

"The lady is sailing from Baltimore in the morning. I've decided to go clear through to the pier."

This was an extraordinary thing for him to explain.

They sat in silence until the train moved, and they could forget the snoring. . . . The coach grew colder, and Betty unpacked a steamer rug which they used for a lap-robe. Even the old darkey went to sleep after Wilmington.

"Letters—" she said at last. "I have been thinking about that. . . . There's no way to tell where I am to be. I won't know until London, where I am to meet my old master. Perhaps then I could tell you—but I daren't think of letters and risk disappointment. . . . You must wait until I write you——"

Morning began to count the days, and she knew what was in his mind.

"That's just it—one gets to lean on letters. One's letters are never one's self. I know that extended writing throws one out from the true idea of another. I

shall think of to-night during the weeks. . . . It seems, we forgot the world to-night. There—behind the scenes—how wonderful. . . . There was no thought about it. I just found myself in your arms——”

“Then I am not to write—until I hear from you?” he asked. It had not occurred to him before that she could have any deeper reason than an uncertain itinerary.

“That will be best. . . . Don't you see, writing is your work. It will make you turn your training upon me. Something tells me the peril of that. As to-night dimmed away—you would force the picture. . . . Trained as you, one writes to what he wishes one to be, not to what one is. . . . You would make me all over to suit—and when I came, there would be a shock. . . . And then think if some night—very eager and heart-thumping, I should reach a city—so lonely and hungry for my letter—and it shouldn't be there. . . . No, to-night must do for me. I shall go on my way playing and biding my time, until the return steamer. Then some morning, about the first of March, you shall hear that I am back—and that I am waiting for my real letter——”

“And where did you learn all this—about a man writing himself out of the real?” John Morning asked wonderingly.

“If I were to be in one place to receive your letters, I might not have thought of it—yet it is true. . . . Then, my letters are nothing. Perhaps I am a little afraid to write to you. I think with the 'cello——”

“All that seems very old and wise, beyond my kind of thinking,” he said.

For a long time she was listening. It was like that first afternoon. . . . What did Betty Berry hear continually? It gave him a conception of what receptivity meant—that quiescence of all that is common, that abatement of the world and the worldly self, that quality

purely feminine. It was like a valley receiving the afternoon sunlight. He realized vaguely at first that the mastery of self, necessary for such listening, is the very state of being saints pray for, and practice continually to attain. . . . Perhaps, he thought, this is the way great powers come—from such listening—the listening of the soul; perhaps such power would come again and again, if only the strength of it were turned into service for men; perhaps it was a kind of prayer. . . . It was all too vague for him to speak. . . .

She was first to whisper that the dawn had come.

“I love you,” he said.

He saw her eyes with the daylight, as he had not seen them since that first afternoon—gray eyes, very deep. The same strange hush came to him from them. And there was a soft gray lustre with the morning about her traveling-coat; and her brown hair seemed half-transparent against the panes. No one was yet abroad in the coach.

“I don’t seem to belong at all—except that I love you,” he whispered.

“Tell me—what that means—oh, please——”

“When I think of what I am, and who I am, and what I have been—and what common things I have done in the stupidity of thinking they were good,” he explained with a rush of words; “when I think of the dozen turnings in my life, when little things said or done by another have kept me from greater shame and nothingness—oh, it doesn’t seem to me that I belong at all to such a night as this! But when I feel myself here, and see you, and how dear you are to me, how you wait for my words, and what happiness this is together—then it comes to me that I don’t belong to those other things, but only to this—that I could never be a part of those old thoughts and ways, if you were always near——”

“And I have waited a long time. . . . The world has said again and again, ‘He will never come,’ but

something deeper of me—something deeper than plays the 'cello, kept waiting on and on. That deeper me seemed to know all the time."

Talking and listening carried them on. John Morning had the different phases of self segregated in an astonishing way. He spoke of himself as man can only with a woman—making pictures of certain moments, as a writer does. Volumes of emotion, they burned, talking and listening, leaning upon each other's words and thoughts. They were one, in a very deep sense of joy and replenishment. They touched for moments the plane of unity in which they looked with calm upon the parting, but the woman alone poised herself there. They left the old darkey—a blessing in his voice and smile. Such passages of the days' journeys were always important to Betty Berry.

Morning fell often from the heights to contemplate the journey's end and the dividing sea. In spite of his words, in spite of his belief—his giving was not of her quality of giving. His replenishment was less therefore. . . . They moved about the streets of Baltimore in early morning. The baggage went on to the ship. An hour remained. Sounds and passing people distracted him. The woman was fresher than when he had seen her last night, but Morning was haggard and full of needs. . . . She was a continual miracle, unlike anything that the world held—different in every word and nestling and intonation. Much of her was the child—yet from this *naïve* sweetness, her mood would change to a womanhood which enfolded and completed him, so that they were as a globe together. In such instants she brought vision to his substance; mind to his brain, intuition to his logic, divination to his reason, affinity to each element—enveloping him as water an island. The touch of her hand was a kiss; and of her kiss itself, passion was but the atmosphere; there was earth below and sky above. . . . She took him to

the state-room where she was to be, "so you will know where I am when you think of me." . . . They heard the knock of heels on the deck above. . . .

He could not think. He heard them calling for visitors to go ashore. . . . He thought once it was too late, and when he was really below on the wharf and she above, and he realized that the wild hope of being taken away with her, (his own will not entering, as the serpent entered Eden,) he could hardly see her for the blur—not of tears, but of his natural rending. Her voice was but one of many good-byes to the shore, yet it came to him out of the tumult of voices and whistles—as a ewe to find her own.

## 7

MORNING heard some one nearby say that so-and-so had not really sailed, but was just going down the bay. . . . It was thus he learned that he might have passed the forenoon with Betty Berry on the Chesapeake. In fact, there was no reason for him not taking the voyage. . . . In a quick rush of thinking, as he stood there on the piers, all his weaknesses paraded before him, each with its particular deformity. The sorry pageant ended with a flourish, and he was left alone with the throb of the unhealed wound in his side.

Betty Berry would not have agreed to let him take the voyage, just for the sake of being with her. He knew this instinctively, but perhaps it might have been managed. . . . To think he had missed the chance of the forenoon. . . . The liner was sliding down the passage, already forgotten by the lower city. . . . Morning found himself looking into the window of a drink-shop. Bottles and cases of wine in their dust and straw-coats were corded in the window, which had an English dimness and look of age. A quiet place; the signs attested that ales were drawn from the wood and

that many whiskeys of quality were within. Something of attraction for the spirituous imagination was in the sweet woody breath that reached him when he opened the door. A series of race-horse pictures took his mind from himself to better things.

These influences played merely upon the under-surfaces of an intelligence whose thoughts followed the steamer down the Chesapeake as certainly as the flock of gulls. . . . It was that quiet time in the morning, after the floors are washed. The day was bright, with just a touch of cold in the air.

. . . A drink improved him generally. He examined the string of horses again, and talked to the man behind. The man declared it was his law not to drink oftener than once in the half-hour, during the forenoon; he stated that it paid to exert this self-control, as his appetite was better and he was less liable to "slop over" in the afternoon. Morning was then informed that oysters were particularly good just now, and that a man with a weak stomach could live on oysters. . . . There was just one little flange of an oyster that was indigestible. The man knew this because drink makes one dainty about his eating, and one can tell what agrees with him or otherwise. Furthermore, one could detach the indigestible flange in one's mouth before swallowing—anyone could with practice. The man glanced frequently at the clock. . . . Well, he would break over, just once, and make up later. A half hour was sometimes a considerable portage. . . . They became companionable.

Morning started back for New York at noon. The particular train he caught was one of the best of its kind. The buffet, the quality of service and patronage had a different, an intimate appeal to-day. He sat there until dark—in that sort of intensive thinking which seemed very measured and effective to Morning. His chief trend was a contemplation, of course, of the night before.

Aspects appeared that did not obtrude at all with the woman by him. Considering the opportunity, he had kissed her very rarely, as he came to think of it. . . .

His fellow-passengers let him alone. He reflected that he could always get along with the lower orders of men—with sailors, soldiers, bartenders; with the Jakes, Jethros, and Jerries of the world. Duke Fallows had remarked this. . . . Duke Fallows . . . the old Liaoyang adventure came back more clearly than it had for months. . . . That *was* a big set of doings. Certainly there was a thrill about those days, when one stopped to think.

At dinner time, approaching the end of the journey, Morning met a pronounced disinclination to stay on the Jersey side. The little cabin on the hill was certainly not for this condition of mind. He had to stop and think that it was only yesterday noon when he left the cabin. A period of time that flies rapidly, appears strangely long when regarded from the moments of its closing. The period of the past thirty hours since he had left the hill was like a sea-voyage. The lights across the river had a surprising attraction. When he realized the old steam of alcohol, his mind glibly explained that it was merely an episode of a sick and overwrought body; that the real John Morning, of altruism and aspiration, was away at sea with the love-woman, much cherished, the very soul of him.

More than a half-year before he had fled to the country, weary to nausea of men in chairs and buffets. The animalism of it had utterly penetrated him at last; the Conrad study was but one of many revelations. He had hated the *Boabdil*; and hated more the processes of his own mind when alcohol impelled. Only yesterday morning he had hated the whole vanity of New York leisure, with the same freshness that had characterized his first month of cleanliness. Yet he found novelty in the present adventure; the prevailing illusion of which was that

he was wrong yesterday rather than now. That night he sought his old haunts. There was a gladness about it.

"One mustn't be too much alone," he decided, "especially if he is to write. . . . I must have got cocky sitting there alone by the cabin-door. . . . These fellows aren't so bad. . . ."

Presently he was telling the old story of Liaoyang. That roused him a little and pulled upon mental fibers still lame. . . . Was he to be identified always with that? . . . A week later he was telling the story of breaking away from the Russians at Liaoyang and making the journey alone to Koupangtse. This was in a strangely quiet bar on Eighth Avenue, in the Forties. A peculiarity about this particular telling of the story was that he remembered the ferryman on the Hun—the one who had wakened the river-front as he led Eve down to drink—the ferryman who was a leper. . . .

As days passed he went down deeper than ever before. "I must have had this coming——" he would say, and refused to cross the river to rest. There were moments when he felt too unutterably dirty to go to the cabin. One day, he kept saying, "I'm going to see this through." And on another day he reflected continually (conscious of the cleverness of the thought) that this drink passage was like the journey to Koupangtse. . . . Then there was the occasion when it broke upon him suddenly that he was being avoided at the *Boabdil*. He never went back. . . . One morning he joined some sailors who had breezed in from afar. They brought him memories and parlances; their ways were his ways all that day, whose long drift finally brought them to Franey's *Lobelia*, as tough and tight a little bar as you would ask any modern metropolis to furnish. The sailors were down and done-for now, but Morning stood by for the end, enjoying the place and the wide bleakness of it. . . . A slumming party came in about midnight—young men and women of richness and va-



riety, trying to see bottom by looking straight down—as if one could see through such dirty water.

The city's dregs about him—a fabric of idiocy and perversion and murder—did not look so fatuous nor wicked to Morning's eye, as did this perfumed company. They thought they were seeing life, but, deeper than brain, they knew better; their laughter and their voices were off the key, because they were not being true to themselves. Franey's regulars were glad for the extra drinks, but Morning had a fury. His shame for the party was akin to the shame he had held for Lowenkampf on the eve of battle long ago. He arose, short and flaming, yet conscious even in his rage of the brilliance of his idea.

"You people make me sick," he said, lurching out. "You'd have to be *slumee* to see how silly you look——"

They tried to detain him—to laugh at him—but one woman knew better. Her low voice of rebuke to her companions was a far greater rebuke to John Morning at the door.

. . . Finally he began to wonder how long they would keep on giving him money at the bank. He turned up every day. No matter what he drew it was always gone. Sometimes a holiday tricked him, and he suffered. He watched for Sundays, after he learned.

. . . The banking business was a hard process, because he had to emerge; had to come right up to the window and speak to a clean, white man—who had known him before. It became the sole ascent of Morning's day—a torturing one. He washed and shaved for it, when possible, and after a time managed frequently to save enough to steady his nerves for the ordeal. Then he had to write his name, and always a blue eye was leveled at him, and he felt the dirt in his throat. . . . So he drifted for six weeks, and it was winter.

His descent was abrupt and deep. He tried to get back, and found his will treacherous. He was prey at

times to abominable fears. His body was unmanageable from illness. There were times when it would have meant death or insanity not to drink. For the first time in his life he encountered an inertia that could not be whipped to the point of reconstructivity. His thoughts cloyed all fine things; his expression made them mawkish and teary; his emotions overflowed on small matters. Betty Berry, around whom all this brooding revolved, hardly reached a plane worthy of interpretation. Morning's conception of the woman on the afternoon she came to the Armory, or on the night-trip to Baltimore, contrasted with this mental apparition of the sixth week:

"She is a professional musician, making her own way in the world, and taking, as many a man would, the things that please her as she passes. This is not the great thing to her that it is to me. Other men have doubtless interested her suddenly and rousingly, and have gone their way. . . . Had she been a stranger to a man's sudden loving she would never have beckoned me to the chair in the wings that night. She would never have come to my arms—as I went to hers—"

Sweat broke from him. The savage and abandoned company of thoughts had ridden down all else, like a troop of raiders, destroying as they went. . . . The troop was gone; the shouting died away—but he was left more lewd and low than the worst. He had defiled the image of the woman who had given herself so eagerly. He recalled how he had talked of understanding, how he had praised her in his thoughts because she was brave enough to be natural, and to act as a natural woman who has found her own, after years of repression. The other side of the shield was turned to torture him—the sweet, low-leaning, human tenderness of Betty Berry, her patience, her endless and ever-varying bestowals. She had called his the voice of reality, and become silent before it; had proved great enough to remain undestroyed in a man's world; her faith and spirit arose above centuries

of lineage in a man's world—and she was Betty Berry who knew her lover's presence, though they were almost strangers to each other, and opened her arms to him. . . .

It was a hell that he vividly reviewed for seven weeks, and with no Virgil to guide. A scene or two from the final day is enough:

. . . He had come from the bank about one in the afternoon, and had taken a chair in the bar of the *Van Antwerp*. He was neither limp nor sprawling, but in a condition of queer detachment from exterior influences. He knew that it was daylight; heard voices but no words, and carried himself with the rigid effort of one whose limbs are habitually flippant. Perhaps it was because he was so very generous to the waiter that he was allowed to close his eyes without being molested. In any event, his consciousness betrayed him, and away he went in the darkness of dream: The Ferryman of the Hun was poling away at the stream and he, John Morning, was but one of a company in passage. It was not the Hun river this time; the sorrel Eve was not there. Not alone the Ferryman, but all on board were lepers—he, John Morning in the midst of them, a leper. The old wound was witness to this. . . . They tried to land at the little towns but natives came forth and drove them away. Down, down stream they went and always natives came forth to warn them as they neared the land. . . . Even when they drew in to the marshes and the waste-places natives appeared and stoned them away. . . . And so they went down—to the ocean and the storm and Morning opened his eyes.

Opposite, his back to the marble bar, his elbows braced against the rail, stood Mr. Reeve Kennard, watching him, and the look upon the face of the famous correspondent was that of scornful pity—as if there was a truce to an old enmity, no longer worth while.

Still later on that day, over on Second Avenue,

Morning almost bumped into a small yellow sign at the elevator entrance to the Metal Workers' Hall, to the effect that Duke Fallows was to address a gathering there that night.

## 8

A FLASH of love came to his heart for Duke Fallows at the sight of the name. There was nothing maudlin about this; rather, a decent bit of stamina in the midst of sentimental overflows. It was the actual inside relation, having nothing to do with the old surface irritation. . . . Morning took care of himself as well as he could during the day. He meant to mix with the crowd at the meeting, but not to make himself known until he was free from vileness. He would keep track of the other's place and movements in New York. When he was fit—there would be final restoration in the meeting. His heart thumped in anticipation. The yellow poster had turned the corner for him. These first thoughts of the upward trend are interesting:

He meant to cross the river and build a big fire in the cabin. There he would fight it out and cleanse the place meanwhile, in preparation. He pictured the cabin-door open, water on the floor, the fire burning, the smell of soap. He would heat water, wash his blankets, put them out in the sun; polish his kettles with water and sand. Every detail was important, and how strangely his mind welcomed the freshness of these simple thoughts. The glass of the windows would flash in the morning, and the door of oak would gleam with its oil. . . . Finally he would bring Duke there.

This was the triumph of it all. He would bring the sick man home; tend the fire for him, go to the dairy-man's for milk and eggs. They could call Jake and talk to him—seeing the heart of a simple man. . . . They would talk and work together . . . the sick

man looking up at the ceiling, and he, Morning, at the machine as in the old days. Spring would come, the big trees would break their buds and sprinkle the refuse down—and, God, it would be green again—all this rot ended. . . . So the days would pass quickly until Betty Berry came. . . . Duke would be glad to hear of her.

. . . That night Morning went in with the workers to their Hall and sat far back. The meeting had been arranged under socialistic auspices; seven hundred men at least were present. Through the haze of pipe, cigarette, and cigars, Duke Fallows came forth.

And this was no sick man. His knees were strong, and there was a lightness of shoulder that did away with the huddle of old times. His eyes shone bright under the hanging lamp, and his laugh was as far as Asia from scorn. There was brown upon him; his hands, when they fell idle, were curved as if to fit a broad-ax, and "I'm glad to be with you, men," he said.

". . . I have come to tell you a story—my story. Every man has one. I never tell mine twice the same, but some time I shall tell it just right, and then the answer shall come."

Power augmented in the silence of the smoky hall. The gathering recognized the artist that had come down to them, because he loved the many and belonged with them. They gave him instinctively the rare homage of uncritical attention. Fallows told of Liaoyang—of the whole preparation—of the Russian singing, the generals, the systems by which men were called to service. Always the theme that played through this prelude was the millet of Manchuria. He told of the great grain fields, the feeding troop-horses, the hollows between the hills—how the ancient Chinese city stood in a bend of the river—of the outer fighting, the rains, the mass of men, the Chinese.

This new Duke Fallows hated no man; had no scorn

for the Russian chiefs. His ideas of service and humanity concerned Russia rather than Japan—and not the imperialistic Russia, but the real spirit—the toiler, the dreamer, the singer, the home-maker—the Russia that was ready, perhaps as ready as any people in the world, to put away envy, hatred, war; to cease lying to itself, and to grasp the reality that there is something immortal about simplicity of life and service for others. What concerned this Russia, Fallows declared, concerned the very soul of the western world.

He placed the field for the battle in a large way—the silent, watery skies, all-receiving *kao-liang*, and the moist earth that held the deluges. Morning choked at the picture; the action came back again as Fallows spoke—Lowenkampf himself—the infantry of Lowenkampf slipping down the ledges into the grain—Luban, machine-guns, rout—the little open place in the millet where the Fallows part of the battle was fought.

“. . . He was a young Russian peasant. If he came into this hall now, we would all know instinctively that he belonged to us. He was fine to look upon that day, coming out of the grain—earnest, glad, his heart turned homeward. His enemy was not Japan, but Imperialism, and defeat was upon it. This defeat meant to him, as it did to hundreds of soldiers in that hour—the beginning of the road home. Luban was burning with the shame of detected cowardice. A common soldier had commented upon it in passing. And now this young Russian peasant met the eyes of Luban, and the two began to speak, and I was there to listen.

“The peasant said that this was not his war; that he had been forced to come; that it meant nothing to him if Russia took Manchuria; but that it meant a very great deal to him—this being away—because his six babies were not being fed by the Fatherland, and his field was not being ploughed.

“It was very simple. You see it all. The Father-

land forced starvation upon a man's children, while his field remained unploughed. Only a simple man could say it. You must be straight as a child to speak such epics. It is what you men have thought in your hearts.

"Of course, Luban only knew he was an officer and the man was not. Machine-guns were drumming in the distance, and the grain was hot and breathless all about. The forward ranks were terribly broken—the soldiers streaming back past us. Luban, who opened the discussion, was getting the worst of it, and his best reply was murder. He handled the little automatic gun better than the cause of the Fatherland—shot the *Ploughman* through the breast. I thrust him back to take the falling one in my arms. . . .

"We seemed alone together. There was power upon me. Even in the swiftness and tumult of the passing I made the good man see that I would father his babes, look to the ploughing of his field, and be the son of his mother. His passing made all clear to me. His message was straight from the heart of the world's suffering poor, from the heavy-laden. He spoke to kings and generals, and to all who have and are blind. There in the havoc of the retreat, dying in my arms—he made it vivid as the smiting sun of Saul—that this hideous disorder of militia was not his Fatherland. He would have fought for the real Fatherland. He was a son in spirit, and a state-builder; he would have fought for that; he was not afraid to die. . . .

"Love for him had come strangely to my heart, men. I said to him—words I cannot remember now—something I had never been able to write, because I had not written for men before, but for some fancied elect. I made him know that he had done well, that his field would bring forth, and that his house would glow red with firelight. . . . I think my *Ploughman* felt as I did even before his heart was still—that there is something beyond death in the love of men for one another.

. . . It was wonderful. We forgot the battle. We forgot Luban and the firing. We were one. His spirit was upon me—and the good God gave him peace.

“I tell you quietly, but don’t you see—this that I bring so quietly is the message from the Ploughman who passed—the message of Liaoyang? And this is the sentence of it: Where there is a real Fatherland—there will be Brotherhood.

“The world is so full of pallor and agony and sickness and stealing. First, it is because of the Lubans. The Lubans are sick for power—sick with their desires. Having no self-mastery, they are lost and full of fear. They fear the whip, they fear poverty and denial; theirs is a continual fear of being stripped to the nakedness of what they are—as old Mother Death strips a man. In the terror of all these things they seek to turn the whip upon others, to reinforce their emptiness with exterior possessions. Because their souls are dying, and because they feel the terror of sheer mortality, they seek to kill the virtue in other men. Because they cannot master themselves, they rise in passion to master others. They could not live but for the herds.

“We who labor are the strength of the world. I say to you, men, poverty is the God’s gift to His elect. It is to us who have only ourselves to master—that the dream of Brotherhood can come true. It is alone to us, who have nothing, that these possessions can come, which old Mother Death is powerless to take away. And we who labor and are heavy-laden are making our colossal error to-day. We are the muttering herds. Standing with the many we may not know ourselves. We look upon the cowardice and emptiness of the Lubans and call it Power. We see the ways of the Herd-drivers—and dream of driving others, instead of ourselves. We look upon the Herd-drivers—and turn upon them the same thoughts of envy and hatred and cruelty—which cuts them off



from every source of power and leaves them empty and cowardly indeed.

“These are the thoughts of the herds—and yet down in the muscling mass men are not to blame. It takes room for a man to be himself—it takes room for a man to love his neighbor and to master himself. Terrified, whipped, packed, sick with the struggle and the strain of it all—how can men, turning to one another, find brotherhood in the eyes of their fellows. Living the life of the laboring herds in the great cities—why, it would take Gods to love men so! . . . The world is so full of pallor and agony and sickness and stealing—first, because of the Lubans, and, second, because of the City. . . . And after Liaoyang, I went straight to the Ploughman’s house—for I had given my word. And now I will tell you what I found on the little hill-farm up in the Schwarenka district among the toes of the Bosk mountains, a still country.”

## 9

“I REMEMBER the soldiers at Liaoyang, the last thing, the many who had grasped at the hope that defeat meant the end of the war. They were learning differently as I left. Hundreds gave up from the great loneliness. . . . I carried the name of my Ploughman across the brown country, and the northern autumn was trying to hold out against the frosts. Asia is desolate. We who are white men, and who know a bit of the loveliness of life—even though we labor at that which is not our life—we must grant that the Northern Chinese have learned this: To suffer quietly.

“Baikal was crossed at last. On and on by train into the West—until I came to the little village that he had said. For days it had been like following a dream. Sometimes it seemed to me so wonderful—that young

man coming out of the millet, and what he said—that I thought it must have come to me in a vision, that I was mad to look for his town and the actual house in the country beyond. Yet they knew his name in the little town, and said that early next morning I could get a wagon to take me to the cabin, which was some *versts* away.

“I had known so much of cities. For weeks I had been in the noises of the Liaoyang fighting and in trains. Moreover, I had been ill for a long time, too—a crawling, deadly illness. But that night my soul breathed. I ate black bread by candle-light and drank milk. The sharpness of mid-October was in the air. You will laugh when I say it seemed to me, an American, as if I had come home. In the morning early I looked away to the East, from whence I had come, and where the sun was rising. (The ceiling of the little room was so low I had to bend my head.) To the north the mountains were sharp in the morning light and shining like amethyst. . . . I left the wagon at the first sight of the hut in the distance, and I reached there in the warmth of the morning.

“An old man was sitting in the sun. He asked me to have bread, and said they had some sausage for the coming Sunday. This was mid-week. A child brought good water. Then I heard the cane of the old woman, and saw her hand first, as it thrust the cane out from the door—all brown and palsied, the hand, its veins raised and the knuckles twisted from the weight that bent her fingers against the curve of the stick. The rest was so pure. She had been a tall woman—very thin and bent and white now. When I looked into that face I saw the soul of the Ploughman. I can tell you I wanted to be there. It was very strange. . . . I can see her now, looking up at me, as the old do from their leaning. It was like the purity and distance of the morning. I trembled, too, before this old wife, for the fact in my

mind about her son. I tell you, old mother-birds are wise.

“It was as if my garments smelled of the fighting. She knew whence I had come; she looked into my soul and found the death of her son. Her soul knew it, but not her brain yet. She may have found my love for him, too—the deep bond between us.

“‘Ask the stranger to stay. We will have sausage by the Sunday,’ said the old man. His thought was held by hunger.

“‘Hush, Jan—he comes from our son——’

“‘And where are the children and the young mother?’ I asked.

“‘They are out for faggots in the bush—they will come——’

“I had thought, as I traveled, (the thoughts of the weeks on the road,) to do many things; to give them plentifully of money; to arrange for someone to do the late fall and winter work. I had intended to go on, when sure that everything was at hand to make them comfortable. I tell you, men, it was all too living for that. One could not perform unstudied benefits for the mother of the Ploughman. There was more than money wanted there.

“‘We would like to have you stay with us,’ the mother said, ‘but our poverty is keen, and we have not bread enough now for the winter. . . . He was taken long before the harvest, and it is long until the grain comes again——’

“‘But if he were here—what would be done, Mother?’

“‘Ah, if he came,’ she said strangely. ‘If he came——’

“The father now spoke:

“‘He would cut wood for our neighbors this winter—when the ploughing was finished. That would provide

food—good food. Oh, he would know what to do—our Jan would know——’

“I won’t soon forget that high, wavering voice of the old man—‘Oh, he would know what to do—our Jan is a good son——’ and the shake of his head.

“‘But may I not do some of the things that he would do?’

“I had to say it twice, for I spoke their language poorly. I had understood the son at Liaoyang—but all moments were not like those in which he spoke to me.

“‘And then,’ I added hastily, ‘he sent you some money——’

“I dared not offer much with that pure old face looking at me. The silver and gold that was in my purse I put in her lap.

“‘Oh, it is very much—the good God brought you from him, did he not?’

“‘And we will not need to wait until Sunday for——’

“‘Hush—Jan—no, we will not need to wait.’

“ . . . And then the young mother came. I saw her steps quicken when yet she was far off. The little ones were about her—all carrying something. The older children were laughing a little, but the others were quiet in their haste and effort to keep up. . . . There was one little boy, but I will tell you afterward of the littlest Jan. . . . There was a pallor over the brood. Their health was pure, and their blood strong, but that pallor had come. Men, it was hunger already. Here were the fields, and the Fatherland had taken him before the harvest. This thing, the shocking truth of it; that this actually could be; that a country could do such a thing—made me forget everything else for the moment. Then I realized that I must keep the truth from the young mother. Before I spoke at all they told her that I had come from her husband.

“Her lips were white, her breasts wasted. She was lean from hunger, lean from her bearing. Young she

was for the six, but much had she labored, and there was a mountain wildness in her eyes. She was stilled, as the old mother had been, by the fear of hearing her man's death. She dared not ask. She accepted what was said—that I had come from him, that I had brought money, and wished to stay for a little. . . . She leaned against the door, the smaller children gathering at her knees, the others putting away the wood. Her single skirt hung square, and her arms seemed very long, nearly to her knees; her hands loose and tired. Her hair was yellow; the wind had tossed it. You know how a horse that has been listening, suddenly catches his breath again. The same sound came from her as she started to breathe again. . . . One of the smaller children laughed, and I looked down. It was the little four-year-old, the third Jan of that house, and he was close to my knees, looking up at me . . . and we were all together.

“I loved the world better after that look of the child into my eyes. . . . I took him on my shoulder. We went to the village together. That night the wagon brought us back; there was much food. . . . And that was my house. I looked out on the mountains the next day, and for many days to come, and, men—their grand sky-wide simplicity poured into my heart. I took the old horse out, and we ploughed during the few days remaining. There was not much land—but we ploughed it together to the end, when the frost made the upturned clods ring. Then I strawed up the shed for the old horse to pass his winter in warmth, and brought blankets for him. I respected that old horse. Health and good-fellowship had come to me as we worked together. I remember the sharp turning of the early afternoons from yellow to gray and to dark. . . . Then we went into the bush together in the early winter days. The ax rang, and the snow-bolt was piled high each day with wood. The smell of the wood-smoke in the morning air had a

zest for my nostrils I had never known before, and at night the cabin windows were red with fire-light. We were all one together. And I think the spirit of the Ploughman was there in the happiness.

"Sometimes in the night when I would get up to replenish the fire—the mystery of plain goodness would come to me. I would see the children and others all around. Then at the frosty window, shading the fire from my eyes, I looked out upon the snows. I was unable to contain the simple grandeurs that had unfolded to me day by day. . . . And then I would go back to the blankets where the little boy lay—his hand always fumbling for me as I crept in. The love that I felt for this child was beyond all fear. We could stand together against any fate. And one night it came to me that from much loving of one a man learns to love the many, and that I would really be a man when I learned to love the world with the same patience and passion that I loved the little boy. The Ploughman came along in a dream that night and said it was all quite true.

"And that was the winter. . . . I wish you could have seen this sick man who had come. I had lain on my back for months, except when some great effort aroused me. I had that coming on, men, which makes a man walk—as a circus bear turns and totters on his back feet. The house, the field, the plough, the horse, woods, winter, and mountains, love for the child, love for all the others—the much that my hands found to do and the heart found to give—these things made me new again. These simple sound and holy things.

"I had been a sick man mentally and morally, too, sick with ego and intellect—a nasty sickness. But one could not look, feeling the joy in which I lived, upon the snows of the foothills, nor afar through the yellow winter noons to the gilded summits of the Bosks; one could not look into the eyes of the children, the last vestige of hunger pallor gone from them; one could not talk of

tobacco-and-sausage with the old man by his fireside; nor watch the mysterious great givings of the two mothers—their whole lives giving—pure instruments of giving—passionate givers, they were; givers of life and preservers of life—I say, men, one could not live in this purity and not put away such evil and cruel things. . . . As the sickness of the blood went from me—so that sickness of mind. . . . And, I tell you, we were ready as a house could be, when the news came officially that our Ploughman was among the missing from the battle of Liaoyang.

“It was sharper than any winter night. We stood in the cabin and wept together. Then in the hush—the real thought of it all came to one—to whom, do you think? . . . She was on her knees—the *old mother*—praying for the other peasant cabins in Russia—the thousands of others from which a son and husband was gone—‘cabins to which the good God has not sent such a friend.’ . . . I tell you, men, all the evil of past days seemed washed from me in that hour. . . . And that is my home. (The old horse and I opened the fields again in the springtime.)

“After that I went down to Petersburg to tell my story, and to Moscow. I have told it in cellars and stables—in Berlin, in Paris, and London. I am making the great circle—to tell it here—and on, when we are finished, to Chicago, to Denver and San Francisco—and then the long sail homeward, following the first journey to the foothills of the Bosk range. I will go to my old mother there, and to the little boy, who looked up into my eyes—as if we were born to play and talk and sleep together.

“The days of the conscript gangs are over here, men. Such days are numbered, even in Russia. They don’t come to your door in this country and take you away from your work to fight across the world—but the Lubans are here—and the cities are full of horror. It is

in the cities where the herds are, where the little Lubans whip, and the bigger Lubans thrive. In the pressure and heaviness of the cities—the thought that comes to the herd is the old hideous conception of the multitude—that the way of the Lubans is the way of life. . . . It isn't the way. The way of life has nothing to do with greed, nor with envy, nor with schemes against the bread of other men. It is a way of peace and affiliation—of standing together. And you who have little can go that way; you who labor can go that way—because you are the strength of the world. Don't resist your enemies, men—leave them. The Master of us all told us that. And when the herds break, and this modern hell of the city is diminished—the Lubans will follow you out—whining and bereft, they will follow you out, as the lepers of Peking follow the caravans to the gates and beyond. . . . I have told you of my home—the little cabin that came to me from the beginnings of compassion. And there is such a home for every man of you—in the still countries where the voice of God may be heard.”

Morning, desperately ill, rose to leave the hall. In the momentary hush, as he reached the door, the voice of Duke Fallows was raised again, calling his name.

## 10

“JOHN——” a second time.  
Morning turned, his arms lifted despairingly.  
“Wait, John, I'll join you!”

Fallows came down. . . . The man who gently held the door shut smiled with strange kindness. There was a shining of kindness in men's faces. . . . Morning did not feel that he belonged. He was broken and shamed. . . . The big man was upon him—the long arms tossed about him.



"I've been looking and listening for you too long, John, to let you go."

". . . I just wanted to hear you. I'm shot to pieces, Duke; I'll get a few drinks and wait for you. Then, you'll see, I'm all out of range of the man you are——"

There was no answer. Morning looked up to find the long bronzed face laughing, the eye gleaming. Fallows turned to the doorman and another, saying:

"Both of you go with him. He needs a drink or two, and one of you come back to show me the way to him—when I'm through here. . . . This is a great night for us, John."

The three went down in the elevator. . . . And so the sick man had not come back—the dithyrambic Duke Fallows was gone for good. The sick man was strong; the impassioned phrase-maker had risen to the simple testimony of service. From scorn and emotion, from judgment and selection, he had risen to the plane of loving kindness. . . . The air in the street refreshed him a little. Morning found a bar.

"I've been drinking," he said to the men. "Fallows is a king. I was there with him at Liaoyang. . . . Maybe you saw my story in the *World-News*. . . . He stayed in the grain with Luban. I went on to see the cavalry fight. . . . I came back home to do the story. He went on to Russia on the *Ploughman* story——"

"Is he a preacher?" said one of the men.

"Yes—but he learned about war and women first."

"I'll take a soft drink and go back. You stay here, and I'll bring him to you," the same one went on.

The other drank with Morning and agreed that they would not leave until Fallows came.

"And so he learned about war and women first," he said queerly, when they were alone. "But he has been a laboring man——"

"Yes. You heard him."

"But before that farm in Russia——"

"Oh, yes; he was a laborer."

"Well, he certainly got the crowd with him," the man acknowledged.

"You know why, don't you?" Morning said impressively.

"No."

"He's *for* the crowd. People feel it."

"Oh, I knew that."

There was quiet, and then the face turned to Morning:

"Say, how did you get such a start as this? This kind means weeks——"

"It got away from me before I knew it. I must have got to gambling with myself to see how far I could go."

"Are you going to quit?"

A mist filled Morning's mind. The question seemed an infringement. Then it occurred to him how he had fallen to lying to himself.

"He'll make you quit, but don't let him stop you too short. You'd be a wreck in a few hours. You see how you needed these two or three drinks?"

. . . Fallows entered with several of the committee. He had promised to speak to them again.

"It's what I came for," he was saying. "So long as I am wanted I'll stay. . . . Yes, I'm a socialist. . . . Yes, I believe in fighting, but when our kind of men stand together, there won't be anything big enough to give us a fight. When our kind of men look into one another's eyes and find service instead of covetousness—there's nothing in the world to stand against us."

Fallows and Morning were in a steam-room together two hours afterward. Morning was limp and light-headed. He had told of some of the things that had happened since Baltimore—of men he had met—of the slummers—of harrowing nights and waiting for the bank to open.

"You had to have it, John?"

There was something in the way Fallows spoke the word, *John*, that made Morning weaker and filled his throat. He had to speak loudly for the hissing of the steam.

"Why, if you didn't get humble and stay humble after such a training—you'd be the poorest human experiment ever undertaken by the Master. But you can't fail. It isn't in the cards to fail. You've ridden several monsters—Drink, Ambition, Literature—but they won't get you down. Why, even the sorrel mare didn't kill you, as I promised aforetime. I saw a lot in that story. You loved her to the last. You left her dead and hunched on an alien road. You've loved these others long enough. You'll leave them dead—even that big fame stuff. I think you've ridden that pompous fool to death already. They are all passages on the way to Initiation. Your training for service is a veritable inspiration—and you'll write to men—down among men. I love that idea—you'll write the story of Compassion—down among men——"

Fallows' face came closer through the steam. He scrutinized the wound that wouldn't heal. "Did you ever hear about Saint Paul's thorn in the flesh? . . . 'And lest I be exalted above measure through the abundance of revelations, there was given me a thorn in the flesh—?' It all works out. You'll have to excuse me. The Bible was the only book I had with me up in the Bosk country. I found it all I wanted. I would take it again. . . . Yes, John, it's all right with you."

Morning was telling of that afternoon at the Armory. He passed over quickly the period of worldly achievement in New York to the quiet blessedness he had hit upon, finding the hill and the elms.

"That's the formula—to get alone and listen——"

"That's what you preached to-night, wasn't it?" . . . Presently he was back to Betty Berry again—finding her at the 'cello—the wonderful ride to Balti-

more—which brought him to the drink chapter once more. . . . He couldn't see Duke's face as he spoke of the woman. There was a peculiar need of the other saying something when he had finished. This only was offered:

"We won't talk about that now, John. . . . You'd better take another little drink. Your voice is down. . . . You'll be through after a day or two, and I'll stay with you——"

"We'll go over to the cabin to-morrow," said Morning.

They were lying cot by cot in the cooling-room, and the talk for a time concerned Lowenkampf, his court-martial and discharge.

"Do you know how I thought of you coming back, Duke?" Morning whispered afterward.

"Tell me."

"I always thought of you coming back a sick man—staring at the ceiling as you used to—sometimes talking to me, sometimes listening to what I had written. But the main thought was how I would like to take care of you. I was rotten before. I wanted you sick, so I could show you better."

The huge hand stretched across from cot to cot.

"It was afterward—that all the things you said in Liaoyang came back to me right. . . . We were lying in 'Frisco waiting for quarantine, and my stuff was finished the second time, before I read your letter to me and the one to Noyes—and the Ploughman story. That was the first time I really saw it right. There was a little doctor with me—Nevin—who got it all from the first reading. At Liaoyang we were down too low among the fighting to get it. That Ploughman story made my big yarn look like a death-mask of the campaign. Betty Berry got it too. . . . It was the same to-night—why, you got those men, body and soul."

"I'd like to think so, John; but I'm afraid you're

wrong. It was just a seed to-night. Men need to be cultivated every day in a thousand ways. . . . Women get things quicker; they can listen better. . . . The last night before Jesus was taken by the Roman soldiers, he told the Eleven that he could be sure only of them. He knew that of the multitude that heard him—most would sink back. He counted on just the Eleven, and built his church on the weakest, upon the most unstable—counting only on the strength of the weakest link. . . . The fact is, John, I'm only counting on you. I've got to count on you."

Less than five weeks had elapsed, and yet the worst seemed as far back, in some of Morning's moments, as the deck-passage out of China. He had suffered abominably. Fallows stood by night and day at first. He brought back a certain quality from the Russian farm that was pure inspiration to the other. They spoke about the Play. Morning was more than ever glad that Markheim had refused it. They sat long by the fire. More happened than modern America would believe off-hand—for John Morning began to learn to listen. Fallows was happy. His presence in the room was like the fire-light. Twice more he went across to the Metal Workers' Hall, and still the New York group would not let him go. The Socialists brought him their ideas. He was in the heart of threatening upheavals. He reiterated that they must be united in one thing first; they must have faith in one another. They must not answer greed with greed. They must be sure of themselves; they must have a pure voice; they must know first what was wanted, and follow the vision. . . . Duke Fallows knew that it was all the matter of a leader. . . . He told them of the men and women in Russia who have put off self. Finally Duke appeared to see that his work was done, and he retired from them.

"It is delicate business," he said to Morning. "There's

fine stuff in the crowd—then there's the rest. If I should show common just once—all my work would be spoiled, and even the blessed few would forget the punch of my little story. They think I've gone on west."

Still he didn't leave the cabin on the hill.

It was only when Morning undertook to touch upon the love story—that Fallows looked away. . . . Morning tried to comprehend this. Something had happened. The big man who had stared at so many ceilings of Asia, breaking out from time to time in strange utterances all colored with desire; the man who had met his Eve, and talked of being controlled by her even after death—shuddered now at the mention of Betty Berry. . . . Morning even had a suspicion at last that the other construed a relation between the woman's influence and the excess of alcohol. These moments dismayed him.

There is a dark spot in every man's radiance—and this was the Californian's, Morning concluded. In the transformation which the journey to Russia had effected, his particular weakness seemed hardened into a crust of exceptional austerity. The only women he ever spoke of in the remotest personal fashion belonged to the peasant family of the Ploughman. His audiences were un-mixed by his own arrangement. In tearing out his central weakness, a certain madness on the subject had rushed in, a hatred that knew no quarter, and a zeal in denial that only one who has touched the rim of ruin can know.

On the last night of February they talked and read late. The reading was from Saint Paul in the different letters. Fallows seemed impassioned with the figure.

"I understand him," he said.

"He was afraid of women. Sometimes he seems to hate women," Morning remarked. Certain lines of Paul's on the subject had broken the perfection of the message for him.

A strange look came to Fallows. The finger that was turning a page drew in with the others, and the hand that rested upon the book was clenched. . . .  
"Paul knew women," he muttered.

"You think before he took that road to Damascus—he knew women?"

"Yes——"

"Even the Paul who stood by holding the garments of the stoners of Stephen?"

"He was a boy then. He learned afterward, I think."

"He couldn't have known the saints among them," said Morning, who was smiling in his heart.

"Perhaps some saint among them was the one who made him afraid. You know women won't have men going alone—not even the saints among women. . . . There may have been one who refused to be dimmed altogether even by that great light."

"But he went alone——"

"In that way she wouldn't be the Thorn," Fallows said slowly. "She would be greater power for him. Yes, Saint Paul went alone. We wouldn't be reading him to-night—had he turned back to her."

That hurt. Morning was no longer smiling within. "I didn't learn women—even as a boy," he said.

Fallows was unable to speak. He had never loved Morning as at this moment. He was tender enough to catch the strange pathos of it, which the younger man could not feel.

"You're a natural drunkard, John," he said presently. "You are by nature ambitious, as it is intimated Cæsar was; but you are naturally a monk, too. I say it with awe."

"You are wrong" Morning said with strength. "When this woman came into the room at the Armory that first day—it was as if she brought with her the better part of myself——"

"You said that same before. You were sick. You

were torn by exhaustion and by that letter of mine about Reeve Kennard. It was the peace and mystery a woman always brings to a sick man. . . . *Your* woman is your genius, John. Any rival will stifle and defame it. It's the woman in a man that makes him a prophet or a great artist. Your ego is masculine; your soul is feminine. When you learn to keep the ego out of the brain, and use the soul, you will become an instrument, more or less perfect, for eternal utterances. When you achieve the union of the man and woman in you—that will be your illumination. You will have emerged into the larger consciousness. You are not so far as you think from that high noon-light. If you should take a woman in the human way, you will not achieve in this life the higher marriage, of which the union of two is but a symbol. That would be turning back, with the spiritual glory in your eyes—back to the shadow of flesh."

"How do you know that?" Morning asked coldly.

"Because of the invisible restraints that have kept you from women so far. . . . I believe you are prepared to tell men something about the devils of drink and ambition—having met them?"

"It is possible."

"I speak with the same authority."

Morning did not accept this authority, but was long disturbed after the light was out. . . . Her ship had been six days at sea.

They opened the door wide to the first morning of March. Snow was upon the hill, but there was a promise in the air, even in the sharpness of it. The wind came in, searched among the papers of the table, disordered the draughts of the chimney, filling the room with a faint flavor of wood-smoke, that perfect incense. They stood there, testing the day, and each was thinking of the things of the night before. Fallows said:

"John, you didn't build this cabin with the idea of a woman coming?"



"No; it was built before I found her the second time. It was my escape from *Boabdil*. . . . But I thought of her coming, many times afterward—just as I thought of you coming back to stare at the rafters——"

Fallows looked down intently at him for a moment, and said:

"John, you've got about all your equipment now. You can't stand much more tearing down. My road is not for you. You were given balance against that. Don't venture into what is alien ground for you. You will get back your health. Even the wound will heal. Then will come to you those gracious ideals of singleness, plainness of house and fare, of purity and solitude and the integration of the greater dimension of force. . . . You are through looking—you must listen now. The blessedness you told me of this last summer was but a breath of what you will get. . . ."

"You are a natural monk. If you were in a monastery, the laws restraining you would be gross and material, compared with those bonds which nature has put upon you. The cowl, the cell, and the solitude are but symbols again of the inner monasticism a few rare souls have known. You need no exterior bonds, vows, nor threatenings—no walls, no brandishing threats of damnation. But, if you should betray the invisible restraints that have held you for so many years, the sin would be far deadlier than breaking any vows made to a church or to an order. Vows are for half-men, John; vows are but the crutches of an unfinished integrity."

## II

ON the morning of the Third, at ten, her call came to him. Shortly after twelve he was across the river and far uptown in the hallway of an apartment-house. Even as he spoke her name, his was called from the head

of the stairs. He always remembered the intonation. . . . A fire was burning in the grate. The 'cello was there. She left the hall-door of the room open, but they heard voices, and it was draughty. . . . She went to close it and returned to Morning, who was still standing.

"What is the matter? You are not well," she said.

. . . It was hard for him to realize that this was only the third time he had seen her. He was trying to adjust her in the other meetings with this—the angel who had come helping to the Armory; the concert Betty Berry, her nature flung wide to expression, bringing her gift with love to her people. The Armory was one; but the Betty Berry of the concert-night was many: she who had come forth from the stage to his arms (and that was the kiss of all time); the listening Betty Berry in the dimness of the Pullman car; holding fast to his hand as a child might, while they watched the dawn of morning together; the Betty Berry who had led him to her berth on the ship—that kiss and this. . . .

The room had disordered him at the first moment. It was so particularly a New York apartment room. But the 'cello helped it; the grate-fire was good, and after she had shut the door—there was something eternal about the sweetness of that—it was quite the place for them to be.

He was animate with emotions—and yet they were defined, sharp, of their own natures, no soft overflow of sentiment, each with a fineness of its own, like breaths of forest and sea and meadow lands. These were great things which came to him; but they were not passions. . . . He saw her with fear, too. Simply being here, had the impressiveness of a miracle. It was less that he did not deserve to be with her, than that the world he knew was hardly the place for such blessedness. He was listening to her, in gladness and humility:

" . . . I asked myself again and again after you were gone, 'Is it a dream?' . . . I moved about the

decks waiting for the night, as one in a deep dream. . . . You were gone so quickly after that voice. Oh, I was all right. I was full of you. It would have seemed sacrilege to ask for you again. . . . Yet I seemed to expect you with every knock or step or bell. They asked me to play on shipboard, and I could hardly believe you were not among those who listened. . . . That first night at sea, the moon was under a hazy mass. I don't know why I speak of it, but I remember how I stood watching it—perhaps hours—and out of it all I only realized at last that my hands were so small for the things I wanted to do for you, and for everybody."

That was the quality of her—as if between every sentence, hours of exterior influences had intervened. . . . He began to realize that Betty Berry never explained. All that afternoon, in different ways, his comprehension augmented on how fine a thing this is. She was glad always to abide by what she said or did. Even on that night, when she came from her playing to the wings where he stood, came to his arms, while the people praised her—she never made light of that acceptance. Many would have diminished it, by saying that they were not accountable in the excitement and enthusiasm of a sympathetic audience. It was so to-day when the door was closed. It seemed to Morning as if human adults should be as fine as this—above all guile and fear.

He was in a risen world that afternoon. Often he wished he could make the world see her as he did. But that was the literary habit, and a tribute to her. Certainly it was not for the writing. He was clay beside her, but happy to be clay. . . . She did not know it, he thought, but she was free.

That was his thought of the day. Betty Berry was free. The door of the cage was open for her. She did not have to stay, but she did stay for love of the weaker-winged.

"Will all our meetings be so different and lovely?"

she asked in the early dusk. "Please tell me about yourself very long ago—the little boy, before he went away."

It was queer for her to ask that. He had expected her to inquire at once about the three months since their parting in Baltimore. He had determined to tell if she asked, but it was hard even to think of his descents, with her sitting by the fire so near. Such things seemed to have nothing to do with him now—especially when he was with her. They were like old and vile garments cast off; and without relation to him, unless he went back and put them on again. Little matters like Charley and his sister had a relation, for they were without taint. His thoughts to-day were thoughts of doing well for men, as in fine moments with Duke Fallows—of going out *with her* into the world to help—of writing and giving, of laughing and lifting. . . . It was surprising how he remembered the very long ago days—the silent, solid, steadily-resisting little chap. Many things came back, and with a clearness that he had not known for years. The very palms of her hands were upturned in her listening; it seemed as if the valves of her heart must be open.

"I can see him—the dear little boy——"

He laughed at her tenderness. . . . They went out late to dinner; and by the time he had walked back to the house it was necessary for him to leave, if he caught the last car to Hackensack. Duke Fallows would be expecting him at the cabin. . . .

It came to him suddenly, and with a new force, on the ferry, that he had once wished she were pretty. He suffered for it again. He could never recall her face exactly. She came to him in countless ways—with poise for his restlessness, with faith and stamina that made all his former endurings common—but never in fixed feature. It was the same with her sayings. He remembered the spirit and the lustre of them, but never the words. . . . She was a saint moving unobserved

about the world, playing—adrift on the world, and so pure.

He realized also that he had spoken of Betty Berry for the last time to Duke Fallows. There was no doubt in his mind now that Fallows had replaced his old weakness with what might be called, in kindness—fanaticism. . . . The thought was unspeakable that Betty Berry could spoil his work in the world—he, John Morning, a living hatch of scars from his errors . . . and so arrogant and imperious he had been in evil-doing! This trend made him think of her first words to-day: "You are not well." It was true that he had been astonished often of late by a series of physical disturbances, so much so that he had begun to ask himself, in his detached fashion, what would come next. He could not accept Fallows' promise that he would get altogether right in health again. He was certainly not so good as he had been. These things made him ashamed.

Now that he was away from her, the sense obtained that he had not been square in withholding the facts of the wastrel period. It didn't seem quite the same now, as when she was sitting opposite. He would have to tell her some time, and of that certain mental treachery to her, and of the wound, too. . . . He saw the light of the hill cabin. A touch of the old irritation of Liaoyang had recurred of late. Morning could master it better now. Still so many things that Fallows had said in Asia had come true. Climbing up the hill, he laughed uneasily at the idea of his being temperamentally a monk. . . . He had not strayed much among women; he had been too busy. Now he had met his own. He would go to her to-morrow. His love for her was the one right thing in the world. Fallows nor the world could alter that. . . .

The resistance which these thoughts had built in his mind was all smoothed away by the spontaneous affec-

tion of the greeting. They sat down together before the fire, but neither spoke of the woman who had come between.

## 12

ON the way to Betty Berry the second day, Morning could not quite hold the altitude of yesterday. There was much of the boy left in the manner of his love for her. The woman that the world saw, and which he saw with physical eyes, was only one of her mysteries. The important thing was that he saw her really, and as she was not seen by another. . . . They had been together an hour when this was said:

“There comes a time—a certain day—when a little girl realizes what beauty is, and something of what it means in the world. That day came to me and it was hard. I fought it out all at once. I was not exactly sure what I wanted, but I knew that beauty could never help me in any way. I learned to play better when I realized this fully. I have said to myself a million times, ‘Expect nothing. No one will love you. You must do without that,’ I believed it firmly. . . . So you see when I went back to the Armory that next morning I had something to fall back upon. . . . I would not have thought about it except you made me forget—that afternoon. Why, I forget it now when you come; but when you go, I force myself to remember——”

“Why do you do that?”

She was looking into the fire. The day was stormy, and they were glad to be kept in.

“Why do you do that?” he repeated.

“Because I can’t feel quite at rest about our being together always. It seems too wonderful. You must understand—it’s only because it is so dear a thing——”

She had spoken hastily, seeing the fear and rebellion in his eyes.

"Betty Berry. . . . We're not afraid of being poor. Why not go out and get married to-day—now?"

Her hand went out to him.

"That wouldn't be fine in us," she said intensely. "I would feel that we couldn't be trusted—if we did anything like that. . . . Oh, that would never keep us together—*that* is not the great thing. And to-day—what a gray day and bleak. We shall know if that day comes. It will be one such as the butterfly chooses for her emerging. It must not be planned. Such a day comes of itself. . . . Why, it would be like seizing something precious from another's hand—before it is offered——"

"And you think you are not beautiful?" he said.

"Yes."

He tried to tell her how she seemed to him when they were apart—how differently and perfectly the phases of her came.

"It makes me silent," he went on. "I try to tell just where it is. And sometimes when I am away—I wonder what is so changed and cleansed and buoyant in my heart—and then I know it is you—sustaining."

"It doesn't seem to belong to me—what you say," she answered. "I don't dare to think of it as mine. . . . Please don't think of me as above other women. I am not apart nor above. I am just Betty Berry, who comes and goes and plays—dull in so many ways—as yet, a little afraid to be happy. When you tempt me as now to be happy—it seems I must go and find someone very miserable and do something perfect for him. . . . But, it is true, I fear nothing so much as that you should believe me more than I am."

A little afterward she was saying in her queer, unjointed way, as if she spoke only here and there a sentence from the thoughts running swiftly through her mind:

". . . And once, (it was only a few weeks after

the Armory, and I was playing eastward) I heard your name mentioned among some musicians. They had been talking about your war, and they had seen the great story. . . . I couldn't tell them that I know you? . . . It was known you were in New York, and one of the musicians spoke of an early Broadway engagement—of starting for New York that very night. It was the most common thing to say—but I went to my room and cried. Going to New York—where you were. Can you understand—that it didn't seem right for him, just to take a train like that? And I had to go eastward so slowly. For a while after that, traveling out there, I couldn't hold you so clearly; but as we neared New York—whether I wished it or not—I began to feel you again, to expect you at every turning. Sometimes as I played—it was uncanny, the sense that came to me, that you were in the audience, and that we were working together. . . . And then you came.”

Her picture changed now. Morning grew restless. It was almost as if there were a suggestion from Duke Fallows in her sentences:

“I thought of you always as alone. . . . You have gone so many ways alone. Perhaps the thought came from your work. I never could read the places where you suffered so—but I mean from the tone and theme of it. You were down among the terrors and miseries—but always alone. . . . You will go back to them—alone, but carrying calmness and cheer. You will be different. . . . It's hard for me to say, but if we should clutch at something for ourselves—greedily because we want something now—and you should not be able to do your work so well because of me—I think—I think I should never cease to suffer.”

A dozen things to say had risen with hostility in his mind to check this faltering expression, the purport of which he knew so well in its every aspect. He hated the thought of others seeing his future and not considering



him. He hated the fear that came to him. There had been fruits to all that Fallows had said before. He had plucked them afterward. And now Betty Berry was one with Fallows in this hideous and solitary conception of him. And there she sat, lovely and actual—the very essence of all the good that he might do. He was so tired of what she meant; and it was all so huge and unbreakable, that he grew calm before he spoke, from the very inexorability of it.

“There is no place for me to go—that you could not go with me. Every one seems to see great service for me, but I see it with you. Surely we could go together to people who suffer. . . . I have been much alone, but I spent most of the time serving myself. I have slaved for myself. If Duke Fallows had left me alone, I should have been greedy and ambitious and common. I see you now identified with all the good of the future. You came bringing the good with you to the Armory that day, but I was so clouded with hatred and self-serving, that I really didn’t know it until afterward. . . . All the dreams of being real and fine, of doing good in work, and with hands and thoughts, of sometime really being a good man who knows no happiness but service for others—that means you—you! You must come with me. We will be good together. We will serve together. Everybody will be better for us. We will do it because we love so much—and can’t help it——”

“Oh, don’t say any more—please—please! It is too much for me. Go away—won’t you?”

She had risen and clung to him, her face imploring.

“Do you really want me to go away?” he said.

“Yes—I have prayed for one to come saying such things—of two going forth to help—prayed without faith. . . . I cannot bear another word to be said to-day. . . . I want to sit here and live with it——”

He was bewildered. He bent to kiss her brow—but refrained. . . . Her face shone; her eyes were filled with tears. . . . He was in the street trying to recall what he had said.

## 13

**H**E did not cross the river, but wandered about the city. . . . She had starved her heart always, put away the idea of a lover, and sought to carry out her dreams of service alone. Then he had come. In the midst of mental tossing and disorder to-day, he had stumbled upon an expression of her highest idea of earth-life: for man and woman to serve together—God loving the world through their everyday lives. . . . And she had been unable to bear him longer near her. It was the same with her heart, as with one who has starved the body, and must begin with morsels.

He was in the hotel writing-room—filling pages to her. He did not mean to send the pages. It was to pass the time until evening. He lacked even the beginnings of strength to stay away from her until to-morrow. He would have telephoned, but she had not given him the number, or the name of the woman who kept the house. The writing held his thoughts from the momentarily recurring impulse to go back. The city was just a vibration. Moments of the writing brought her magically near. In spite of her prayer for him not to, his whole nature idealized her now. His mind was swept again and again with gusts of her attraction. Thoughts of hers came to him almost stinging with reality . . . and to see her again—to see her again. Once in the intensity of his outpouring, he halted as if she had called—as if she had called to him to come up to her out of the hollows and the vagueness of light.

It was nightfall. He gave way suddenly—to that

double-crossing of temptation which forces upon the tempted one the conviction that what he desires is the right thing. . . . He would be a fool not to go. She would expect him. . . . He arose and set out for her house.

But as he neared the corner something within felt itself betrayed.

"And so I cannot be content with her happiness," he thought. "I cannot be content with the little mysteries that make her the *one* Betty Berry. I am not brave enough to be happy alone—as she is. I must have the woman. . . ."

He was hot with the shame of it. He saw her bountifulness; her capacity to wait. Clearly he saw that all these complications and conflicts of his own mind were not indications of a large nature, but the failures of one unfinished. She did not torture herself with thoughts; she obeyed a heart unerringly true and real. She shone as never before; fearless, yet with splendid zeal for giving; free to the sky, yet eager to linger low and tenderly where her heart was in harmony; a stranger to all, save one or two in the world, pitilessly hungry to be known, and yet asking so little. . . . Compared with her, he saw himself as a littered house, wind blowing through broken windows.

. . . That night, sitting with Duke Fallows before the fire, brooding on his own furious desires, he thought of the other John Morning who had brooded over the story of Liaoyang in so many rooms with the same companion. All that former brooding had only forced the world to a show-down. He knew, forever, how pitifully little the world can give. . . . A cabin on the hill and a name that meant a call in the next war. . . .

The face of the other cooled and stilled him. Duke was troubled; Duke, who wasn't afraid of kings or armies or anything that the world might do; who didn't

seem even afraid now of the old Eve violence, whoever she was—was afraid to speak of Betty Berry to his best friend. . . . Morning wondered at this. Had Duke given up—or was he afraid of mixing things more if he expressed himself? The fire-lit face was tense. One after another of the man's splendid moments and performances ran through Morning's mind—the enveloping compassion—in Tokyo, Liaoyang, in the grain, in the ploughed lands—the Lowenkampf friend, the friend of the peasant house, the friend of men in Metal Workers' Hall, his own friend in a score of places and ways—the man's consummate art in friendliness. . . .

“Duke, there's a lot to think about in just plain living, isn't there?”

The other started. “Hello,” he said. “I didn't think you were in my world.”

Betty Berry was waiting at the stairs the next morning.

“Did you get my letter?” she whispered, when the door had swung to.

“No. . . . Mailed last night?”

“Yes.”

“I left the cabin two hours before the mail. It's rural delivery, you know. Jethro reaches my box late in the forenoon——”

“I wrote it about dark, but didn't mail it until later. I thought you would come——”

He told her how he had written, how he had come to her house, and turned away. They were very happy.

“To think that you came so far. I couldn't sit still, I was so expectant at that very time. . . . But it was good for us——”

“I understood after a while.”

“Of course, you understood. . . . I was—oh, so happy yesterday. Yet, aren't we strange? Before it was night, I wanted you to come back. . . . I

didn't go out last night. I couldn't practice. To-night, there are some friends whom I must see——”

Morning, in a troubled way, reckoned the hours until evening. . . . She was here and there about the room. The place already reflected her. She had never been so blithe before. . . . It was an hour afterward that he picked up a little tuning-fork from the dresser, and twanged it with his nail. She started and turned to him, her thumb pressed against her lips—her whole attitude that of a frightened child.

“I wonder if I could tell you?” she said hesitatingly. “It would make many things clear. You told me about little boy—you. It was my father's——”

He waited without speaking.

“. . . He used to lead the singing in a city church,” she said. “Always he carried the tuning-fork. He would twang it upon a cup or a piece of wood, and put it to his ear—taking the tone. He had a soft tenor voice. There was never another just like it, and always he was humming. . . . I remember his lips moving through the long sermons, as he conned the hymn-book, one song after another, tapping his fork upon a signet ring. How I remember the tiny twanging, the light hum of an insect that came from him, from song to song, his finger keeping time, his lips pursed over the words.

“He never heard the preacher. There was no organ allowed, but he led the hymns. He loved it. He held the time and tone for the people—but never sang a hymn twice the same, bringing in the strangest variations, but always true, his face flaming with pleasure.

“For years and years we lived alone. As a little girl, I was lifted to the stool to play his accompaniments. As a young woman, I supported him, giving music lessons. The neighbors thought him an invalid. . . . All his viciousness was secret from the world, but common property between us from my babyhood. I pitied him and

covered him, fed him when he might have fed himself, waited upon him when he might have helped me. He would hold my mind with little devilish things and thoughts—as natural to him as the tuning-fork. . . . He would despoil the little stock of food while I was away, and nail the windows down. My whole life, I marveled at the ingenuity of his lies. He was so little and helpless. I never expected to be treated as a decent creature, from those who had heard his tales. They looked askance at me.

“For years, he told me that he was dying, and I sat with him in the nights, or played or read aloud. If any one came, he lay white and peaceful, with a look of martyrdom. . . . And then at the last, I fell asleep beside him. It was late, but the lamp was burning. I felt him touch me before morning—the little old white thing, his lips pursed. The tuning-fork dropped with a twang to the floor. I could not believe I was free—but cried and cried. At the funeral, when the church people spoke of ‘our pain-racked and martyred brother’——”

She did not finish.

Morning left her side. “I never thought of a little girl that way,” he said, standing apart. “Why, you have given me the spirit of her, Betty. It is what you have passed through that has made you perfect. . . . And I was fighting for myself, and for silly things all the time——”

But he had not expressed what was really in his mind—of the beauty and tenderness of unknown women everywhere, in whose hearts the sufferings of others find arable ground. Surely, these women are the grace of the world. His mother must have been weathered by such perfect refinements, otherwise he would not have been able to appreciate it in Betty Berry. It was all too dreamy to put into words yet, but he felt it very important in his life—this that had come to him from Betty’s story, and from Betty standing there—woman’s

power, her bounty, her mystic valor, all from the unconscious high behavior of a child.

She had given him something that the *Ploughman* gave Duke Fallows. He wanted to make the child live in the world's thoughts, as Duke was making the *Ploughman* live.

It was these things—common, beautiful, passed-by things, that revealed to Morning, as he began to be ready—the white flood of spirit that drives the world, that is pressing always against hearts that are pure.

He went nearer to her.

“Everything I think is love for you, Betty,” he said.

The air was light about her, and delicate as from woodlands.

## 14

THE horse and phaeton—both very old—of the rural-carrier could be seen from the hill-cabin. Duke Fallows walked down to the fence to say “Hello” to Jethro whom he admired. He returned bearing very thoughtfully a letter addressed to John Morning. It was from across the river; the name, street, and number of the sender were written upon the envelope. . . . Fallows sat down before the fire again, staring at the letter. He thought of the woman who had written this, (just the few little things that Morning had said) and then he thought of the gaunt peasant woman in Russia, the mate of the *Ploughman*, and of the mother of the *Ploughman*. He thought of the little boy, Jan—the one little boy of the six, that had his heart, and whom he longed for.

He thought of this little boy on one hand—and the world on the other.

Then he thought of Morning again, and of the woman.

He loved the world; he loved the little boy. Some-

times it seemed to him when he was very happy—that he loved the world and the little boy with almost the same compassion—the weakness, fineness, and innocence of the races of men seeming almost like the child's.

He thought of John Morning differently. He had loved him at first, because he was down and fighting grimly. He thought of him of late as an instrument, upon which might be played a message of mercy and power to all who suffered—to the world and to the little boy alike.

And now Fallows was afraid for the instrument. Many things had maimed it, but this is the way of men; and these maimings had left their revelations from the depths. Such may measure into the equipment of a big man, destined to meet the many face to face. Fallows saw this instrument in danger of being taken over by a woman—to be played upon by colorful and earthly seductions. No man could grant more readily than he, that such interpretations are good for most men; that the highest harmony of the average man is the expression of love for his one woman and his children. But to John Morning, Fallows believed such felicity would close for life the great work which he had visioned from the beginning.

He did not want lyrical singing from John Morning, he wanted prophetic thunderings.

He wanted this maimed young man to rise up from the dregs and tell his story and the large meaning of it. He wanted him to burn with a white light before the world. He wanted the Koupangtse courage to drive into the hearts of men; a pure reformatory spirit to leap forth from the capaciousness where ambition had been; he wanted John Morning to ignite alone. He believed the cabin in which he now sat was built blindly from the boy's standpoint, but intelligently from the spirit of the boy, to become the place of ignition. He believed this of Morning's to be a celibate spirit that could be finally



maimed only by a woman. He believed that Morning was perfecting a marvelous instrument, one that would altar all society for the better, if he gave his heart to the world.

Fallows even asked himself if he did not have his own desperate pursuits among women in too close consideration. . . . It would be easy to withdraw. So often he had faltered before the harder way, and found afterward that the easy one was evil. . . . He left it this way: If he could gain audience with Betty Berry alone this evening he would speak; if Morning were with her, he would find an excuse for joining them and quickly depart. Last night Morning had returned to the cabin early; the night before by the last car. It was less than an even chance. . . . Fallows crossed the river, thinking, if the woman were common it would be easy. The way it turned out left no doubt as to what he must do. Approaching the number, on the street named on the corner of the envelope, he passed John Morning, head down in contemplation. He was admitted to the house. Betty Berry appeared, led him to a small upper parlor, and excused herself for a moment.

Fallows sat back and closed his eyes. He was suffering. All his fancied hostility was gone. He saw a woman very real, and to him magical; he saw that this was bloody business. . . . She came back, the full terror of him in her eyes. She did not need to be so sensitive to know that he had not come as a cup-bearer. . . . He was saying to himself, "I will not struggle with her. . . ."

"Have I time to tell my story?"

"I was going out. . . . John Morning just went away because I was to meet old friends. But, if this is so very important, of course——"

"It is about him."

"I think you must tell your story."

Fallows talked of Morning's work, of what he had

first seen from Luzon, and of the man he found in Tokyo. He spoke of the days and nights in Liaoyang, as he had watched Morning at his work.

"He's at his best at the type-writer. When the work is really coming right for him, he seems to be used by a larger, finer force than he shows at other times. . . . It is good to talk to you, Miss Berry. You are a real listener. You seem to know what I am to say next——"

"Go on," she said.

"When a man with a developed power of expression stops writing what the world is saying, and learns to listen to that larger, finer force within him—indeed, when he has a natural genius for such listening, and cultivates a better receptivity, always a finer and more sensitive surface for its messages—such a man becomes in time the medium between man and the energy that drives the world——"

"Yes——"

"Some call this energy that drives the world the Holy Spirit, and some call it the Absolute. I call it love of God. A few powerful men of every race are prepared to express it. These individuals come up like the others through the dark, often through viler darkness. They suffer as others cannot dream of suffering. They are put in terrible places—each of which leaves its impress upon the instrument—the mind. You have read part of John Morning's story. Perhaps he has told you other parts. His mind is furrowed and transcribed with terrible miseries.

"Until recently his capacity was stretched by the furious passion of ambition. It seemed in Asia as if he couldn't die, unexpressed; as if the world couldn't kill him. You saw him at the Armory just after he had passed through thirty days hard enough to slay six men. Ambition held him up—and hate and all the powers of the ego.

"This is what I want to tell you: 'When the love of

God fills that furious capacity which ambition has made ready; when the love of God floods over the broadened surfaces of his mind, furrowed and sensitized by suffering, filling the matrix which the dreadful experiences have marked so deeply—John Morning will be a wonderful instrument of interpretation between God and his race.'

"I can make my story very short for you, Miss Berry. Your listening makes it clearer than ever to me. I see what men mean when they say they can write to women. Yes, I see it. . . . John Morning has made ready his cup. It will be filled with the water of life—to be carried to men. But John Morning must feel first the torture of the thirst of men.

"Every misery he has known has brought him nearer to this realization; days here among the dregs of the city; days of hideous light and shadow; days on the China Sea, sitting with coolies crowded so they could not move; days afield, and the perils; days alone in his little cabin on the hill; sickness, failures, hatreds from men, the answering hatred of his fleshly heart—all these have knit him with men and brought him understanding.

"He has been down among men. Suffering has graven his mind with the mysteries of the fallen. You must have understanding to have compassion. In John Morning, the love of God will pass through human deeps to men. Deep calls to deep. He will meet the lowest face to face. He will bring to the deepest down man the only authority such a man can recognize—that of having been there in the body. And the thrill of rising will be told. Those who listen and read will know that he has been there, and see that he is risen. He will tell how the water of life came to him—and flooded over him, and healed his miseries and his pains. The splendid shining authority of it will rise from his face and from his book.

"And men won't be the same after reading and lis-

tening; (nor women who receive more quickly and passionately)—women won't be the same. Women will see that those who suffer most are the real elect of this world. It's wonderful to make women listen, Miss Berry, for their children bring back the story.

"It isn't that John Morning must turn to love God. I don't mean that. He must love men. He must receive the love of God—and give it to men. To be able to listen and to receive with a trained instrument of expression, and then to turn the message to the service of men—that's a World-Man's work. John Morning will do it—if he loves humanity enough. He's the only living man I know who has a chance. He will achieve almost perfect instrumentation. He will express what men need most to know in terms of art and action. The love of God must have man to manifest it, and that's John Morning's work—if he loves humanity enough to make her his bride."

Fallows was conscious now of really seeing her. She had not risen, but seemed nearer—as if the chair, in which she slowly rocked, had crept nearer as he talked. Her palms resting upon her knees were turned upward toward him:

"And you think John Morning is nearly ready for that crown of Compassion?"

"Yes——"

"You think he will receive the Compassion—and give it to men in terms of art and action?"

"Yes——"

"You think if he loves me—if he turns his love to me, as he is doing—he cannot receive that greater love which he must give men?"

"Yes——"

"And you think it would be a good woman's part to turn him from her?"

"Yes——"

"And you came to tell me this?"

"Yes."

"I think it is true——"

"Oh, listen—listen——" he cried, rising and bending over her—"a good woman's part—it would be that! It would be something more—something greater than even he could ever do. . . . What a vision you have given me!"

She stood before him, her face half-turned to the window. Yet she seemed everywhere in the room—her presence filling it. He could not speak again. He turned to go. Her words reached him as he neared the door.

"Oh, if I only had my little baby—to take away!"

## 15

FALLOWS stood forward on the ferry that night and considered the whole New York episode. He had done his work. He had told the *Ploughman* story five times. It was just the sowing. He might possibly come back for the harvest. . . . He had another story to tell now. Could he ever tell it without breaking? . . . He had tortured his brain to make things clear for Morning and for men. He realized that a man who implants a complete concept in another intelligence and prevents it from withering until roots are formed and fruitage is assured, performs a miracle, no less; because, if the soil were ready, the concept would come of itself. He had driven his brain by every torment to make words perform this miracle on a large scale.

And this little listening creature he had just left—she had taken his idea, finished it for him, and involved it in action. To her it was the Cross. She had carried it to Golgotha, and sunk upon it with outstretched palms. . . . There was an excellence about Betty Berry that amazed him, in that it was in the world. . . . He had not called such women to him, because

such women were not the answer to his desires. He realized with shame that a man only knows the women who answer in part the desires of his life. Those who had come to him were fitted to the plane of sensation upon which he had lived so many years. He had condemned all women because, in the weariness of the flesh, he had suddenly risen to perceive the falsity of his affinities of the flesh. "What boys we are!" he whispered, "in war and women and work—what boys!"

Betty Berry had taught him a lesson, quite as enormous to his nature as the *Ploughman's*. A man who thinks of women only in sensuousness encounters but half-women. He had learned it late, but well, that a man in this world may rise to heights far above his fellows in understanding, but that groups of women are waiting on all the higher slopes of consciousness for their sons and brothers and lovers to come up. They pass their time weaving laurel-leaves for the brows of delayed valiants. . . .

Duke thought of the men he had seen afield, the gravity with which these men did their great fighting business, the world talking about them. Then he thought of the little visionary in her room accepting her tragedy. . . .

Even now, in the hush and back-swing of the pendulum, it seemed very true what he had said. She had seen it. It is dangerous business to venture to change the current of other lives; no one knew it better than Fallows. But he considered Morning. Morning, as it were, had been left on his door-step. Morning would be alone now—alone to listen and receive his powers. . . . Fallows looked up from the black water to the far-apart pickets of the wintry night. He was going home.

The cabin was lit. Fallows climbed the hill wearily. There was a certain sharpness as of treachery from his

night's work, but to that larger region of mind, open to selfishness and the passion to serve men, peace had come. He was going home, first to San Francisco—then to the Bosks and the little boy.

Morning arose quickly at the sound of the step on the hard ground, and opened the door wide. He had been reading her letter, which Fallows had left upon the table. The letter had been like an added hour with her. It was full of shy joy, full of their perfect accord, remote from the world—its road and stone-piles and evasions. . . . Fallows saw that he looked white and wasted. The red of the firelight did not mislead his eye. Its glow was not Morning's and did not blend with the pallor.

"I'm going on to-morrow, John," he said.

"'Frisco?"

"Yes—and then——"

"You'll come back here?"

"No, I'll keep on into the west to *my* cabin——"

"It would be nearer this way. I planned to see you after 'Frisco."

"I'll come back," Fallows' thought repeated, "for the harvest."

"And so you are going to make the big circle again?"

"Yes."

"You haven't finished this first one, until you reach Noyes and your desk in the *Western States*."

"The next journey won't take so long."

"You've been the good angel to me again, Duke. It's quite a wonder, how you turn up in disaster of mine. . . . I wonder if I shall ever come to you—but you won't get down. You wouldn't even stay ill."

"You won't get down again, John, at least, in none of the ways you know about——"

Both men seemed spent beyond words. . . . Morning saw in the other's departure the last bit of resistance lifted from his heart's quest. Betty Berry had

come between them. Morning's conviction had never faltered on the point that Fallows was structurally weak on this one matter. . . . And so he was going. All that was illustrious in their friendship returned. They needed few words, but sat late before turning in. The cabin cooled and freshened. Each had the thought, before finally falling asleep, that they were at sea again. . . . And in the morning the thing that lived from their parting was this, from Duke Fallows:

"Whatever you do, John—don't forget your own—the deepest down man. He is yours—go after him—get him!"

. . . She was at the top of the stairs when he called the next morning; and he was only half-way up when he saw that she had on her hat and coat and gloves. The day was bitter like the others. He had thought of her fire, and the quiet of her presence. He meant to tell her all about Duke Fallows and the going. It was his thought—that she might find in this (not through words, but through his sense of release from Duke's antagonism) a certain quickening toward their actual life together. He wanted to talk of bringing her to the cabin—at least, for her to come for a day.

"You will go with me to get the tickets and things. I must start west at once."

It was quite dark in the upper hallway. Morning reached out and turned her by the elbow, back toward the door of her room. There in the light, he looked into her face. She was calm, her eyes bright. Whatever the night had brought—if weakness it was mastered, if exaltation it was controlled. But she was holding very hard. There was a tightness about her mouth that terrified him. It was not as it had been with them; he was not one with her.

"You mean that you are going away—for some time?"



"Yes. . . . Oh, you must not mind. We are road people. We have been wonderfully happy. You must not look so tragic——"

It wasn't like her at all. "We are not road people," he thought. . . . "You must not look so tragic,"—that was just like a thing road people might say.

He sat down. The weakness of his limbs held his mind. It seemed to him, if he could forget his body, words might come. At first the thought of her going away was intolerable, but that had dwindled. It was the change in her—the something that had happened—the flippancy of her words. . . . He looked up suddenly. It seemed as if her arms had been stretched toward him, her face ineffably tender. So quickly it had happened that he could not be sure. He wanted this very thing so much that his mind might have formed the illusion. He let it pass. He did not want her to say it was not so.

Words of her letter came back to him. Neither the letter nor yesterday had anything to do with this day. . . . "You are drawing closer all the time. I have been so happy to-day that I had to write. You must know that I sent you away because I could not bear more happiness. . . ."

Where was it? What had happened? He was fevered. Something was destroying him. . . . Betty Berry did not suffer for herself—it was with pity for him. The mother in her was tortured. It was her own life—this love of his for her—the only child she would ever have. She had loved its awakenings, its diffidences, the faltering steps of its expression. The man was not hers, but his love for her was her very own. . . . She had not thought of its death, when Fallows talked the night before. She had thought of *her* giving up for his sake, but not of the anguish and the slaying of his love for her. And this was taking place now.

"You will let me write to you?" he said, still thinking of the letter.

"Oh, yes."

"And you will write to me?"

She remembered now what she had written. . . . The fullness of her heart had gone into that. She could not write like that again. Yet he was asking for her letters, as a child might ask for a drink. . . . She could not refuse. It wasn't in nature to see his face, and refuse. . . . Surely if she remained apart it was all any one could ask.

"Yes, I will write sometimes."

He stood in the center of the room, his head bowed slightly, his eyes upon the wall. He was ill, bewildered, his mind turning here and there only to find fresh distress. . . . Suddenly he remembered that he had not told her of his drinking. . . . That must be it. Some one else had told her, and she was hurt and broken.

"I meant always to tell you," he said. "Only it really did not seem to signify by the time you came back. And when I was with you—oh, I seemed very far from that. I don't understand it now——"

She did not know what he meant; did not care, could not ask. It was something he clutched—in the disintegration. . . . He looked less death-like in his thinking of it.

"It doesn't greatly matter," she said. "I have to go west. . . . Won't you come with me to get the tickets?"

"I can't go out into the street yet. If there is anything more I have done—won't you let me know?"

Suddenly he realized her side, that he was detaining her; that it wasn't easy for her to speak. It was not his way to impose his will upon anyone; his natural shyness now arose, and he fingered his hat.

"Dear John Morning—you haven't done anything. You have made me happy. I must go away to my work

—and you, to yours. . . . It is hard for me, but I see it as the way. I have promised to write——”

The words came forth like birds escaping—thin, evasive, vain words. That which she had seen so clearly the night before, (and which she seemed utterly to have lost the meaning of) was a lock upon every real utterance now. She had not counted upon this tragedy of her mother instinct—this slaying of the perfect thing in him, which she had loved to life.

He arose, and sat down; he swallowed, started to speak, but could not. He was like a boy—this man who had seen so much, just a bewildered boy, his suffering too deep for words—the sweetest part of him to her, dying before her eyes. And the dream of their service together, their hand-in-hand going out to the world, their poverty and purity and compassion together—these were lost jewels. . . . It was all madness, the world—all madness and devilishness. Beauty and virtue and loving kindness were gone, the world turned insane. . . . The thought came to tell *him* she was insane; a better lie still, that she was not a pure woman. She started to speak, but his eyes came up to her. . . . She tried it again, but his eyes came up to her. He fingered his hat boyishly. The mother in her breast could not.

Their dreadful night. The winter darkness was coming on swiftly. Her train was leaving.

“But you said you were not going to work for the present. You have been working so hard all winter——”

He had said it all before.

“Yes—but there is much for me to do—days of study and practice—and thinking. You will understand. . . . Everything will come clear and you will understand. You see, to-day—this isn’t a day for words with us. . . . One must have one’s own secret place.

You must say of me, 'She suddenly remembered something—and had to go away.' . . ."

"'She suddenly remembered something and had to hurry away,'" he repeated, trying to smile. "But she will write to me. I will work—work—and when you let me, I will come to you——"

"Yes——"

He had to leave. . . . He kissed her again. There was something like death about it.

"If we *were* only dead," she said, "and were going away together——"

. . . A man stepped up to him, regarded him intently. Morning realized that he must get alone. He had been shaking his head wearily, and unseeingly—standing in the main corridor of the station in Jersey—shaking his head. . . . It was full night outside. He forgot that he did not have to recross the river—and was on the ferry back to New York before he remembered. . . .

He gained the hill to his cabin long afterward. That reminded him that Duke Fallows had gone, too—and that very morning.

It seemed farther back in his life than Liaoyang.

**B**ETTY BERRY'S journey was ten hours west by the limited trains—straight to the heart of her one tried friend, Helen Quiston, a city music teacher. Her first thought, and the one buoy, was that she would be able to tell everything. . . . She could not make Helen Quiston feel the pressure that his Guardian Spirit (she always thought of Duke Fallows so) invoked in that half-hour of his call, but with a day or a night she could make her friend know what had happened, and

something of the extent of force which had led to her sacrifice. Helen would tell her if she were mad. All through that night she prayed that her friend would call her mad—would force her to see that the thing she had done was viciously insane.

She was engulfed. For the first time, her spirit failed to right itself in any way. She was more dependent upon Helen Quiston than she had conceived possible, since the little girl had fought out the different cruel presentations of the days, during the early life with her father.

Throughout the night *en route* she thought of the letter she had promised to write to John Morning. The day with him had brought the letter from a vague promise to an immediate duty upon her reaching the studio.

. . . She was to write first, and at once. Already she was making trials in her mind, but none would do. He would penetrate every affectation. The wonder and dreadfulness of it—was that she must not tell the truth, for he would be upon her, furiously human, disavowing all separateness from the race, as one with a message must be; disavowing the last vestige of the dream of compassion which his Guardian Spirit had pictured.

. . . She knew his love for her. She had seen it suffer. Would Helen Quiston show her that she must bring it back—that the Guardian Spirit was evil? There was a fixture about it, a whispering of the negative deep within.

She could not write of the memories. Not the least linger of perfume from that night at the theatre must touch her communication. Yet it was the arch of all. As she knew her soul and his, they had been as pure as children that night—even before a word was spoken. It had been so natural—such a rest and joy. . . . She had learned well to put love away, before he came. From the few who approached, she had laughed and withdrawn. The world had daubed them. In her heart to-

ward other men, she was as a consecrated nun. And this was like her Lord who had come. . . . She had made her way in the world among men. She knew them, worked among them, pitied them. Her father had been as weak, as evil, as passionate, as pitiable. In the beginning she had learned the world through him—all its bitter, brutal lessons. As she knew the 'cello and its literature, she knew the world and the cheap artifices it would call arts. . . . She had even put away judgments; she had covered her eyes; accustomed her ears to patterings; made her essential happiness of little things; she had labored truly, and lived on, wondering why. And he had come at last with understanding. She had seen in Morning potentially all that a woman loves, and cannot be. He had made her mind and heart fruitful and flourishing again. Then his Guardian Spirit had appeared and spoken. As of old there had been talk of a serpent. As of old the serpent was of woman.

Helen Quiston was just leaving for a forenoon's work away from the studio. She sat down for a moment holding the other in her arms; then she made tea and toast, and hastened off to return as quickly as possible. . . . For a long time Betty Berry stood by the piano. The day was gray and cold, but the studio was softly shining. All the woods of it were dark, approximately the black of the grand piano; floors and walls and picture frames were dark, but the openings were broad, and naked trees stirred outside the back windows. . . . She did not look the illness that was upon her. She was a veteran in suffering. . . . She forgot to breathe, until the need of air suddenly caught and shook her throat. It was often so when the hidden beauty of certain music unfolded to her for the first time.

She went to the rear windows, gradually realizing

that it would soon be spring-time. There was a swift, tangible hurt in this that brought tears. There had been no tears for the inner desolation. . . . "Poor dear John Morning," she whispered.

The reproduction of a wonderful painting of the meeting of Beatrice and Dante held her eye for a long time. . . . The blight was upon her as she tried a last time to write. It spread over her hand and the table, the room, the day. There was a hurt for him in everything she wanted to say. She was hot and ill—her back, her brain, her eyes, from trying. She could not hurt him any more. He had done nothing but give her healing and visions. His Guardian had done nothing but tell the truth, which she had seen at the time. This agony of hers had existed. It was like everything else in the world.

She wrote at last of their service in the world. They needed, she said, the strong air of solitude to think out the perfect way. It was very hard for her, who had fared so long on dreams and denials and loneliness. He must remember that. "Great things come to those who love at a distance," she wrote bravely. Tears started when she saw the sentence standing so dauntlessly upon the page of her torture. . . . It would make them kinder, make their ideals live—and how young they were! . . . She said that she was afraid to be so happy as he had made her in certain moments. Often she found herself staring at the picture of Beatrice and Dante.

The thought that broke in upon this brave writing was that she was denied the thrill of great doing, as it had come to her while Fallows had spoken. . . . It would have lived on, had she gone that night, without seeing Morning again. Moreover, her way was different from that which she had pictured, as his Guardian talked. She did not see then that her action made a kind of lie of all her giving up to that hour; and that there

could be no united sacrifice. It was pure, voiceless sacrifice for her—and blind murdering for him. . . .

From the choke of this, her mind would turn to the song of triumph her spirit had sung as his Guardian told the story. . . . She had seemed to live in a vast eternal life, as she listened; and this which she was asked to do—was just to attend a temporary flesh sickness. She had the strange blessedness that comes with the conviction that immortality is here and now, as those few men and women of the world have known in their highest moments.

She could get back nothing of that exaltation. It would never come again. The spirit it had played upon was broken. . . . She had been rushing away on her thoughts. It was afternoon, the letter unfinished, the 'cello staring at her from the corner. It had stood by her in all her sorrows of the years, but was empty as a fugue now—endless variations upon the one theme of misery. . . . Happiness does not come back to the little things—after one has once known the breath of life. . . . She closed the narrow way of the letter, which she had filled with words—no past nor future, only the darkness that had come in to mingle with the dark hangings of the room of her friend. . . . She kissed the pages and sent them back the way she had come in the night.

The qualities that had brought her the friend, Helen Quiston, and which had made the friendship so real, were the qualities of Betty Berry. She had come to the last woman to be told of her madness, or to find admonition toward breaking down the thing she had begun. . . . They had talked for hours that night.

“I know it is lovely, dear Betty. Why, you look lovelier this instant than I ever dreamed you could be. Loving a man seems to do that to a woman—but the privilege of the greater thing! Oh, you *are* privileged.



That's the way of the great love. I should like sometime to know that Guardian. How did mere man grasp the beauty and mystery of service like that? . . . Stay with me. I will serve you, hands and feet. It is enough for me to touch the garment's hem. . . . You are already gone from us, dearest. You have loved a man. You do love a man. He is worthy. You have not found him wanting. What matters getting him—when you have found your faith? Think of us—think of the gray sisterhood you once belonged to—nuns of the world—who go about their work helping, and who say softly to each other as they pass, 'No, I have not been able to find him yet.' ”

## 17

MORNING awoke in the gray of the winter morning. The place was cold and impure. He had fallen asleep without the accustomed blasts of hill-sweeping wind from window to window. He had not started the fire the night before; had merely dropped upon his cot, dazed with suffering and not knowing his weariness. He was reminded of places he had awakened in other times when he could not remember how he got to bed. Beyond the chairs and table lay the open fire-place, the ashes hooded in white.

The blackness of yesterday returned, but with a hot resentment against himself that he had not known before. He had followed Betty Berry about for hours, and had not penetrated the hollow darkness with a single ray of intelligence. This dreadful business was his, yet he had been stricken; had scarcely found his speech. There was no doubt of Betty Berry now, though a dozen evasions of hers during the day returned. She was doing something hard, but something she thought best to do. The real truth, however, was rightly his property. . . . To-day she would write. To-morrow her letter

would come. If it did not contain some reality upon which he might stand through the present desolation, he would go to her. . . . Yes, he would go to her.

His side was hurting. He was used to that; it had no new relation now. Everything was flat and wretched. Distaste for himself and this nest in which he had lain, was but another of the miserable adjuncts of the morning. He stood forth shivering from the cot; struck a match and held it to some waste paper. Kindling was ready in the fire-place, but the paper flared out and fell to ashes, as he watched his left hand. He went to the window and examined his hand closer. The nails were broken and dry; there were whitish spots on the joints. He had seen something of this before, but his physical reactions had been so various and peculiar, in the past six weeks, that he had refused to be disturbed.

Just now his mind was clamoring with memories. He had the sense that as soon as an opening was forced in his mind, a torrent would rush in. He felt his heart striking hard and with rapidity. The floor heaved windily, or was it the lightness of his limbs? He went about the things to do with strange zeal, as if to keep his brain from a contemplation so hideous that it could not be borne.

He lit another paper, placed kindling upon it, poked the charred stubs of wood free from the thick covering of white, and brought fresh fuel. Then, as the fire kindled, he opened the door and windows, and swept and swept. . . . But it encroached upon him. . . . The open wound was no longer a mystery. . . . His dream of the river and the boat that was not allowed to land; his dream of the cliff, and looking down into the life of earth through the tree-tops . . . the ferry-man of the Hun . . . and now yesterday with its two relations to the old cause.

His whole nature was prepared for the revelation; yet it seemed to require years in coming. Like the loss

of the manuscript in the Liao ravine, it was done before he knew.

"Of course, they had to rush away, when they found out," he mumbled. "Of course, they couldn't stay. Of course, they couldn't be the ones to tell me."

It might have been anywhere in China; the ferryman on the Hun . . . during the deck-passage. . . . It did not greatly matter. Some contact of the Orient had started the slow virus on its long course in his veins. He knew that it required from three to five years to reach the stage of revealing itself as now. He saw it as the source of his various recent indispositions, and realized that he could not remain in his cabin indefinitely. It would be well for a while. Neither Duke Fallows nor Betty Berry would tell. He could keep his secret, and then—to die in some island quarantine? None of that. This was his life. He was master of it. He should die when he pleased, and where.

. . . Yes, she had her gloves on, when he came. She had not removed them all day, not even at the very last. . . . How strange and frightened she had been—how pitiful and hard for her! She could not have told him. She had loved him—and had suddenly learned. . . . She had seen that he did not know. . . . It must have come to her in the night—after the last day of happiness. Perhaps the processes of its coming to her were like his. He was sorry for Betty Berry.

And he could not see her again; he could not see her again. He passed the rest of the day with this repetition. . . . His life was over. That's what it amounted to. Of course, he would not let them segregate him. His cabin would do for a while, until the secret threatened to reveal itself, and then he would finish the business. . . . The two great issues leaned on each other: The discovery of his mortal taint took the stress from the tragedy of yesterday; and that he

could not see Betty Berry again kept madness away from the abominable death. . . . The worst of it all was that the love-mating was ended. This brought him to the end of the first day, when he began to think of the Play.

The literary instinct, of almost equal disorder with dramatic instinct, and which he had come to despise during the past year, returned with the easy conformity of an undesirable acquaintance—that reportorial sentence-making faculty, strong as death, and as uncentering to the soul of man. Morning saw himself searching libraries for data on leprosy, being caught by officials—the subject of nation-wide newspaper articles and magazine specials, the pathos of his case variously appearing—Liaoyang recalled—his own story—Reever Kennard relating afresh the story of the stealing of *Mio Amigo*. What a back-wash from days of commonness! The ego and the public eye—two Dromios—equal in monkey-mindedness and rapacity.

Morning was too shattered to cope with this ancient dissipation at first.

After the warring and onrushing of different faculties, a sort of coma fell upon the evil part, and the ways of the woman came back to him. He sat by his fire that night, the wound in his side forgotten, the essence of Asia's foulness in his veins, forgotten—and meditated upon the sweetness of Betty Berry. He approached her image with a good humility. He saw her with something of the child upon her—as if he had suddenly become full of years. "How beautiful she was!" he would whisper; and then he would smile sadly at the poor blind boy he had been, not to see her beautiful at first. . . . To think, only three days before, she had sent him away, because she could not endure, except alone, the visitation of happiness that came to her. People of such inner strength must have their secret times and places, for their strength comes to them alone. To

think that he had not understood this at once. . . . He had been eloquent and did not know it.

"Hell," he said, "that's the only way one can say the right thing—when he doesn't plan it."

. . . If his illness had been any common thing she would not have been frightened away. He was sure of this. It took Asia's horror—to frighten her away. He saw her now, how she must have fought with it. He shuddered for her suffering on that day. . . . That day—why it was only the day before yesterday. . . . He never realized before how the illusion, Time, is only measurable by man's feeling. . . . He was a little surprised at Duke Fallows. He himself wouldn't have been driven off, if Duke had suddenly uncovered a leprous condition. He had been driven off by Duke's ideas, but no fear of contagion could do it. Yet Duke was the bravest man he had ever known—in such deep and astonishing ways courageous. Yet he had been brought up soft. He wasn't naturally a man-mingler. It had been too much for him. It was a staggerer—this. Fallows was a Prince anyway. Every man to his own fear. . . . This was the second morning.

Old Jethro, the rural delivery carrier, drove by that morning without stopping. She could not have mailed her letter until last night—another day to wait for it. Morning tried to put away the misery. Women never think of mail-closing times. They put a letter in the box and consider it delivered. . . . He puzzled on, regarding the action of Duke Fallows, in the light of what he would have done. No understanding came.

All thoughts returned in the course of the hours, his mind milling over and over again the different phases, but each day had its especial theme. The first was that he would not see Betty Berry again; that Duke Fallows had been frightened away, the second; and on the third

morning, before dawn, he began to reckon with physical death, as if this day's topic had been assigned to him.

Sister Death—she had been in the shadows before. Occasionally he had shivered afterward, when he thought of some close brush with her. She was all right, only he had thought of her as an alien before. It really wasn't so—a blood sister now. . . . He recalled scenes in the walled cities of China. . . . She had certainly put over a tough one on him. . . . It would be in this room. He wouldn't wait until his appearance was a revelation. . . . He would do the play. Something that he could take, would free him from the present inertia, so he could work for a while, a few hours a day. When the play was done—the Sister would come at his bidding. . . . He had always thought of her as feminine. A line from somewhere seemed to seize upon her very image—this time not sister, but—

*Dark mother, always gliding near, with soft feet—*

He faced her out on that third morning. Physically there was but a tremor about the coming. Not the suffering, but a certain touch and shake of the heart, heaved him a little—the tough little pump stopped, its fine incentive and its life business broken. . . . But that was only the rattle of the door-knob of death.

It was all right. He wasn't afraid. The devil, Ambition, was pretty well strangled. There must be something that lasts, in his late-found sense of the utter unimportance of anything the world can give—the world which appreciates only the boyish part of a real man's work. So he would take out with him a reality of the emptiness of the voice of the crowd. Then the unclean desire for drink was finished—none of that would cling to him; moreover, no fighting passion to live on would

hold him down to the body of things. . . . But he would pass the door with the love of Betty Berry—strong, young, imperious, almost untried. . . . Would that come back with him? Does a matter of such dimension die? Does one come back at all? . . .

Probably in this room. . . .

Then he thought of the play that must be done in this room; and curiously with it, identifying itself with the play and the re-forming part of it, was the favorite word of Duke Fallows'—*Compassion*. What a title for the play! Duke's word and Duke's idea. . . . All this brought him to the thought of Service, as he had pictured it for Betty Berry—a life together doing things for men—loving each other so much that there were volumes to spare for the world—down among men—to the deepest down man.

His throat tightened suddenly. He arose. A sob came from him. . . . His control broke all at once. . . . How a little run of thoughts could tear down a man's will! It wasn't fear at all—but the same depiction running in his mind that had so affected Betty Berry when she begged to be alone. . . .

"The deepest down man—the deepest down man. . . . It is I, Duke! . . . Surely you must have meant me all the time!"

But it passed quickly, properly whipped and put away with other matters—all but a certain relating together of the strange trinity, Death, Service, and Betty Berry—which he did not venture to play with, for fear of relapse. . . . He had been eating nothing. He must go to Hackensack. The little glass showed him a haggard and unshaven John Morning, but there was nothing of the uncleanness about the face in reflection. . . . He heard the "giddap" of Jethro far on the road. The old rig was coming. . . . It stopped at his box. He hurried down the hill.

TWO letters; one from Duke Fallows. Morning opened this on the way up the slope. He was afraid of the other. He wanted to be in the cabin with the door shut—when that other was opened. . . . Fallows was joyous and tender—just a few lines written on the way west: “. . . I won’t be long in ’Frisco. I know that already. The *Western States* does very well without me. . . . Soon on the long road to Asia and Russia. I must look up Lowenkampf again before going home. He was good to us, wasn’t he, John? . . . And you, this old heart thrills for you. You are coming on. I don’t know anything more you need. I say you are coming on. You’ll do the Play and the Book. . . . John, you ought to write the book of the world’s heart. . . . And then you will get so full of the passion to serve men that writing won’t be enough. You will have to go down among them again—and labor and lift among men. Things have formed about you for this. . . . We are friends. . . . I am coming back for the harvest.”

The sun had come out. Morning was standing in the doorway as he finished. The lemon-colored light fell upon the paper. . . . It wasn’t like Duke to write in this vein—after running away. He repeated aloud a sentence to this effect. Then he went in, shut the door, and, almost suffocating from the tension, read the letter of Betty Berry.

It was just such a letter as would have sent him to her, before his realization of the illness. . . . He saw her torture to be kind, and yet not to lift his hopes. It was different from Fallows’, in that it fitted exactly to what he now knew about himself. And he had to believe from the pages that she loved him. There was an eternal equality to that. . . . The air seemed full of service. Two letters from his finest human relations,



each stirring him to service. He did not see this just now with the touch of bitterness that might have flavored it all another time. . . . What was there about him that made them think of him so? If they only knew how meager and tainted so much of his thinking was. Some men can never make the world see how little they are.

He wrote to Betty Berry. Calm came to him, and much the best moments that he had known in the three days. He was apt to be a bit lyrical as a letter-lover—he whose words were so faltering face to face with the woman. Thoughts of the play came to his writing. He was really in touch with himself again. He would never lose that. He would work every day. When a man's work comes well—he can face anything. . . . The play was begun the fourth day, and, on the fifth, another letter from Betty Berry. This was almost all about his work. She had seized upon this subject, and her letters lifted his inspiration. She could share his work. There was real union in that. . . .

He was forgetting his devil for an hour at a time. There were moments of actual peace and well-being. He did not suffer more than the pain he had been accustomed to so long. And then, a real spring day breathed over the hill.

That morning, without any heat of producing, and without any elation from a fresh letter from the woman, he found that in his mind to say aloud:

“I'm ready for what comes.”

By a really dramatic coincidence, within ten minutes after this fruitage of fine spirit, John Morning found an old unopened envelope from Nevin, the little doctor of the *Sickles*. He had recalled some data on Liaoyang while inspecting the morning—something that might prove valuable for the play, in the old wallet he had carried afield. Looking for this in the moulded leather, he found the letter Nevin had left in the Armory, before

departing—just a little before Betty Berry came that day. . . . Nevin had not come back. But Noyes and Field had come.

Morning remembered that Nevin had spoken that morning of finding something for the wound that would not heal. . . . The remedy was Chinese. The Doctor knew of its existence, but had procured the name with great difficulty in the Chinese quarter. . . . Morning was to fast ten days while taking the treatment.

He went about it with a laugh. The message had renewed his deep affection for Nevin. It had come forth from the hidden place where Nevin now toiled, (secretly trying, doubtless, to cover every appearance of his humanity). . . . He remembered how Nevin had studied the wound that refused to heal. The last thing had been his report on that. When there was nothing more to be offered but felicities—he had vanished.

Morning did not leap into any expectancy that he was to be healed, but thoughts of Nevin gave him another desire after the play and the book—to trace the great-hearted little man before the end. Nevin would be found somewhere out among the excessive desolations. If it may be understood, the idea of mortal sickness remained in Morning's mind at this time, mainly as a barrier between him and Betty Berry.

Nevin's drug was procured in New York. Hackensack failed utterly in this. . . . On the third day, Morning suffered keenly for the need of food. A paragraph from Betty Berry on the subject of the fasting at this time completely astonished him; indeed, shook the basic conviction as to the meaning of her departure:

“. . . I have often thought you did not seem so well after I returned from Europe, as you were when we parted. But the ten days will do for you, something that makes whatever might happen in the body seem so

little and unavailing. . . . Don't you see, you are doing what every one, destined to be a world-teacher, has done? . . . What amazes me continually, is that you seem to be brought, one by one, to these things by exterior processes, rather than through any will of your own. . . . The Hebrew prophets were all called upon to do this in order to listen better. Recall, too, the coming forth from the Wilderness of the Baptist, and the forty days in the wilderness of the Master Himself. Why, it is part of the formula! You will do more than improve the physical health; you will hear your message more clearly. . . . I sit and think—in the very hush of expectancy for you.”

As the evidences came, so they vanished. She could not have fled from him in the fear of leprosy and written in this way; nor could Duke Fallows, who was first of all unafraid of fleshly things. The conviction of his taint, and of its incurableness, daily weakened. Before the ten days passed, the last vestige of the horror was cleaned away. Illusion—and yet the mental battle through which he had passed, and which, through three terrible days, had shaken him body and soul, was just as real in the graving of its experience upon the fabric of his being as was the journey to Koupangtse, done hand and foot and horse. He perceived that man, farther advanced in the complications of self-consciousness, covers ground in three days and masters a lesson that would require a life to learn in the dimness and leisure of simple consciousness.

There was no way of missing this added fact: He, John Morning, was not designed to lean. He had been whipped and spurred through another dark hollow in the valley of the shadow, to show him again, and finally, that he was not intended for leaning upon others, yet must have an instant appreciation of the suffering of others. He had been forced to fight his own way to a certain poise, through what was to him, at the time,

actual abandonment in distress, by the woman and the friend he loved. Moreover, he had accepted death; resignation to death in its most horrible form had been driven into his soul—an important life lesson, which whole races of men have died to learn.

He was seeing very clearly. . . . He bathed continually both in water and sunlight, lying in the open doorway as the Spring took root on his hill and below. Often he mused away the hours, with Betty Berry's letters in his hand—too weak almost to stir at last, but filled with ease and well-being, such as he had never known. Water from the Spring was all he needed, and the activity of mind was pure and unerring, as if he were lifted above the enveloping mists of the senses, through which he had formerly regarded life.

Everything now was large and clear. Life was like a coast of splendid altitude, from which he viewed the mighty distances of gilded and cloud-shadowed sea, birds sailing vast-pinioned and pure, the breakers sounding a part of the majestic harmony of granite and sea and sky; the sun God-like, and the stars vast and pure like the birds.

When he actually looked with his eyes, it was as if he had come back, a man, to some haunt of childhood. The little hill was just as lovely, a human delight in the unbudded elms, a soft and childish familiarity in the new greens of the sun-slope grass. The yellow primrose was first to come, for yellow answers the thinnest, farthest sunlight. The little cabin was like a cocoon. He was but half-out. Soon the stronger sunlight would set him free—then to the wings. . . . One afternoon he stared across to the haze of the great city. His eyes smarted with the thought of the Charleys and the sisters, of the *Boabdils* and the slums. . . . Then, at last, he thought of Betty Berry waiting and thinking of him . . . “in the very hush of expectancy.” The

world was very dear and wonderful, and his love for her was in it all.

It was the ninth day that the bandage slipped from him, as clean as when he put it on the day before, and when he opened the door of the cabin he heard the first robin. . . . There was a sweeping finality in the way it had come from Nevin, and the quality of the man lived in Morning's appreciation. His friends were always gone before he knew how fine they were.

He was slow to realize that the days of earth-life were plentiful for him, in the usual course. A man is never the same after he has accepted death. . . . And it had all come in order. . . . He could look into her eyes and say, "Betty Berry, whatever you want, is right for me, but I think it would be best for you to tell me everything. We are strong—and if we are not to be one together, we should talk it over and understand perfectly." . . .

How strange he had missed this straight way. There had been so much illusion before. His body was utterly weak, but his mind saw more clearly and powerfully than ever.

The Play was conceived as a whole that ninth day. The sun came warmly in, while he wrote at length of the work, as he finally saw it. . . . On the tenth day he drank a little milk and slept in his chair by the doorway. . . . There was one difficult run that the robin went over a hundred and fifty times, at least.

**B**ETTY BERRY watched the progress of the fasting with a mothering intensity. She saw that which had been lyrical and impassioned give way to the workman, the deeper-seeing artist. He was not less

human; his humanity was broadened. From one of his pages, she read how he had looked across at the higher lights of New York one clear March night. His mind had been suddenly startled by a swift picture of the fighting fool he had been, and of the millions there, beating themselves and each other to death for vain things. . . . She saw his Play come on in the days that followed the fasting. There was freshness in his voice. She did not know that he had accepted death, but she saw that he was beginning to accept her will in their separation.

And this is what she had tried to bring about, but her heart was breaking. Dully she wondered if her whole life were not breaking. The something implacable which she had always felt in being a woman, held her like a matrix of iron now. Her life story had been a classic of suffering, yet she had never suffered before.

A letter from him, (frequently twice a day, they came) and it was her instant impulse to answer, almost as if he had spoken. And when she wrote—all the woman's life of her had to be cut from it—cut again and again—until was left only what another might say. . . . She was forced to learn the terrible process of elimination which only the greater artists realize, and which they learn only through years of travail—that selection of the naked absolute, according to their vision, all the senses chiseled away. His work, his health, especially the clear-seeing that came from purifying of the body, the detachment of his thoughts from physical emotions—of these, which were clear to her as the impulses of instinct—she allowed herself to write. But the woman's heart of flesh, which had fasted so long for love, so often found its way to her pages, and forced them to be done again. . . . Certain of his paragraphs dismayed her, as:

“Does it astonish you,” he asked, almost joyously, “when I say there is something about Betty Berry be-

yond question—such a luxurious sense of truth? . . . I feel your silences and your listenings between every sentence. It is not what you say, though in words you seem to know what I am to-day, and what I shall be to-morrow—but all about the words, are *you*—those perfect hesitations, the things which I seemed to know at first, but could not express. They were much too fine for a medium of expression which knew only wars, horses, and the reporting of words and deeds of men. . . . Why, the best thing in my heart is its trust for you, Betty Berry. Looking back upon our hours together, I can see now that all the misunderstandings were mine and all the truth yours. When it seems to me that we should be together, and the memories come piling back—those perfect hours—I say, because of this trust, ‘Though it is not as I would have it, her way is better. And I know I shall come to see it, because she cannot be wrong.’”

So she could not hide her heart from him, even though she put down what seemed to her unworthiness and evasion, and decided through actual brain-process what was best to say. A new conduct of life was not carrying Betty Berry up into the coolness beyond the senses. Fasting would never bring that to her. Fasting of the body was so simple compared to the fasting of the heart which had been her whole life. Nor could she ever rise long from the sense of the serpent in woman which she had realized from the words of his Guardian—not a serpent to the usual man, but to the man who was destined to love the many instead of one. . . . She loved him as a woman loves—the boy, the lover, the man of him—the kisses, the whispers, the arms of strength, the rapture of nearness. . . .

He must have been close to the spirit of that night at the theatre, when this was written:

“The letter to-day, with the plaintive note in it, has brought you even closer. I never think of you as one

who can be tried seriously; always as one finished, with infinite patience, and no regard at all for the encompassing common. Of course, I know differently, know that you must suffer, you who are so keenly and exquisitely animate—but you have an un-American poise. . . . You played amazingly. I loved that at once. There was a gleam about it. Betty Berry's gleaming. I faced you from the wings that night. I wanted to come up behind you. You were all music. . . . But I love even better the instrument of emotions you have become. That must be what music is for—to sensitize one's life, to make it more and more responsive. . . .”

Then in a different vein:

“. . . The long forenoons, wherein we grow. . . . Yes, I knew you were a tree-lover; that the sound of running water was dear to you . . . and the things you dream of . . . work and play and forest scents and the wind in the branches. . . . Sometimes it seems to me—is it a saying of lovers?—that we should be boy and girl together. . . . Why, I've only just now learned to be a boy. There was so much of crudity and desire and anguish-to-do-greatly-at-any-cost—until just a little ago. But I've never had a boyhood that could have known you. I wasn't ready for such loveliness in the beginning. . . . I've wanted terribly to go to you, but that is put away for the time.”

These lines wrung her heart. “Oh, no,” she cried, “you have not learned how to become a boy. There was never a time you were not ready—until now! You are becoming a man—and the little girl—oh, she is a little girl in her heart. . . .”

Everything his Guardian had promised was coming to be. He was changing into a man. That would take him from her at the last—even letters, this torrent of his thoughts of life and work. She saw the first process of it—as the Play grasped him finally—the old tragedy of a man turning from a woman to his work. . . .



She built the play from the flying sparks. . . . He was thronged with illusions of production. How badly he had done it before, he said, and how perfect had proved the necessity to wait, and to do it a second time. . . . Even the most unimaginative audience must build the great battle picture from the headquarters scene; then the trampled arena of the Ploughman, deep in the hollow of that valley, and his coming forth through the millet. . . .

“. . . It's so simple," he wrote in fierce haste. "You see, I remember how hard it was for me to grasp that first night, when Fallows brought in the story to the Russian headquarters. . . . I have remembered that. I have made it *so that I could see it then*. And I was woven in and fibred over with coarseness, from months of life in Liaoyang and from the day's hideous brutality. I have measured my slowness and written to quicken such slowness as that. The mystery is, it is not spoiled by such clearness. It is better—it never lets you alone. It won't let you lie to yourself. You can't be the same after reading it. . . . And it goes after the deepest down man. . . . Every line is involved in action.

"The third act—sometime we'll see it together—how the main character leaves the field and goes out in search of the Ploughman's hut, across Asia and Europe; how he reaches there—the old father and mother, the six children, the one little boy, who has the particular answer for the man's lonely love—the mother of the six, common, silent, angular, her skirt hanging square, as Duke put it—but she is big enough for every one to get into her heart. You will see the fear of her man's death, which the stranger's presence brings to her, though he leaves it to Russia to inform the family. You will see the beautiful mystery of compassion that he brings, too. That's the whole shine of the piece. And it came from the ministry of pain.

. . . "I'm not praising *my* Play—it isn't. It's Duke's almost every word of it—every thought, the work of Duke's disciple. I have merely felt it all and made it clear—clear. You see it all. Many thousands must see, and see what the name means. It's the most wonderful word in the world to me, *Compassion*."

Then came the break for a day, and the flash that his work on the Play was finished. "The cabin will be harder for me now. The new work is only a dream so far—and this goes to Markheim to-day. . . . It is very queer that I should go back to Markheim, but somehow I want to pick up that failure. There are other reasons. . . . I shall tell him that he can have five days, I'm just getting ready to go across the River. . . . My health was almost never better. I'm not tired. The work has seemed to replenish me, as your letters do. But that last letter—yesterday's—it seems to come from behind a screen, where other voices were—the loved tones troubled and crowded out by others. It left me restless and more than ever longing to see you. It is as if there were centuries all unintelligible, to be made clear only by being with you. The world and the other voices drown yours——"

She felt the instinct of centuries to hold out her arms to him—arms of the woman, after man's task in the world—home at evening with the prize of the hunt and battle. The world for the day, the woman for the night—that is man's way. She seemed to know it now from past eternity. And for woman—day and night the man of her thoughts. . . . She was afraid of her every written word now. Her heart answered every thrill of his; the murmuring and wrestling resistance of his against the miles, was hers ten-fold. . . . The days of the fasting had not been like this, nor the two weeks that followed in which he had completed the play. . . . April had come. She was ill. Her music was neglected altogether. Her friend, Helen Quiston, never

faltered in her conception of the beauty and the mystery of the separation. With all her will, Helen sustained her against the relinquishing of the lofty ideal of sacrifice, and tried to distract her impassioned turning to the east. . . . She would hold to the death; Betty Berry knew this.

"It's harder now that the play is done," Betty repeated. "He can't be driven instantly to work again. I can't lie to him. He doesn't fight me—he thinks I'm right—that's the unspeakable part of it. There is nothing for me to write about except his work. . . ."

And Helen Quiston found her, a half-hour afterward, staring out of the window, exactly as she had left—her hands in her lap exactly the same. . . . Betty Berry was thinking unutterable things, having to do with adorable meetings in the theatre-wings—of wonderful night journeys, all night talking—of waiting in a little room, and at the head of the stairs. There was an invariable coming back to the first kiss in the wings of the theatre.

"We were real—we were true to each other that night—true as little children. We needed no words," this was her secret story. . . . "Oh, I waited so long for him . . . and we could have gone out together and served in a little way. But they would not let us alone."

He had been across to New York. . . . The second morning after the play was finished, she received a letter with a rather indescribable ending. He told her of fears and strangeness, of intolerable longing for something to happen that would bring them together. . . . The rest is here:

"I'm a bit excited by the thought that just came to me. And another, but I won't tell you yet, for fear. . . . I don't quite understand myself. I seem afraid. I think I would ask more of myself than I would of another man just now. There seem all about me invisible restraints. Something deep within recognizes the

greatness and finality of your meaning to me. . . . It is true, you do not leave the strength to me. Did you ever—? No, I won't ask that. . . . This letter isn't kind to you—unsettling, strange, full of an intensity to see and be with you. . . .”

Moments afterwards, as she was standing at the piano—the letter trailing from her hand—the telephone in the inner room startled her like a human cry.

## 20

**I**T was Morning. She did not remember his words nor her answers—only that she had told him he might come up-town to her. He had dropped the receiver then, as if it burned him.

So, it was a matter of minutes. Nothing was ready. Least of all, was she ready. She could hardly stand. She had forgotten at first, and it had required courage, of late, to look in the mirror. She would have given up, before what she saw now, but a robin was singing in the foliage by the rear windows. She went out to open the studio door into the hall, then retired to the inner room again. . . . “He can heal you, and bring back the music,” her heart whispered, but her mind covered before herself, and this mate of herself, Helen Quiston, and before his Guardian. . . . She heard his step on the stair . . . called to him to wait in the studio. He was pacing to and fro.

Morning felt the light resistance in her arms. His kiss fell upon her cheek. He held her at arm's length, looking into her face.

She laughed, repeating that she was not ill. . . . She was always thinner in summer, she said. In her withholding, there was destructiveness for the zeal he had brought; and that which she set herself resolutely to impart—the sense of their separateness—found its

lodgment in his nature. It would always be there now, she thought; it would augment, like ice about a spring in early winter, until the frost sealed the running altogether. The lover was stayed, though his mind would not yet believe.

"Is it really possible," he said, sitting before her restlessly, "that I am here in your house, and that I can stay, and talk with you, and see you and hear you play? I have thought about it so much that it's hard to realize."

"It is quite what a lover would say," she thought. . . . She had to watch her words. Her heart went out to him, but her mind remembered the work to do. . . . Self-consciousness, and a weighing of words—how horrible between *them!*

"And what made you come? I had just read your letter, when the telephone rang——"

"I shouldn't have sent that letter," he answered. "I must have sent it because of the things I thought, and didn't write. . . . The night before, I had come home to the cabin—after Markheim and the city. It was dreadful—with the work gone. Yesterday was too much for me—the Spring day—alone—not ready to begin again—you here. . . . I got to thinking about you so fast—and the shame of it, for us to be apart—that I couldn't endure it. . . . I thought of going to you in a month—in a week; and then when the letter was mailed, I thought of it being with you this morning. . . . A thousand things poured into my mind. It seemed finally as if everything was wrong between us; as if I had already remained too long from you. It was like fighting devils. . . . And then I tried to beat the letter to you, but it got here by an earlier train this morning."

He was like a child to her, telling about something that had frightened him.

Their silences were strained. His eyes had a sleepless look. Betty saw it working upon him—the repulsion

that had gone from her. She wished she might go to his arms and die. It suddenly came over her—the uselessness of it all—the uselessness of being a woman, of waiting, of final comprehension—all for this rending. . . . Yet she saw what would happen if she followed her heart. He would take her. There would be a radiant season, for the lover within him was not less because his work was for other men. But there was also within him (his Guardian had made her believe it) her rival, a solitary stranger come to the world for service, who would not delay long to show him how he had betrayed his real work, how he had caged his greater self, his splendid pinions useless. . . . Morning would hear the world calling for work he could not do.

*"There seem all about me invisible restraints."*

This from the letter of the morning—alone remained with her. It expressed it all. The sentence uprose in her mind. It was more dominant to her than if a father had forbade his coming, or even if by his coming another was violated.

All the forbiddings that Society can bring against desire are but symbols compared to the invisible restraints of a full man's nature. Men who are held by symbols, ruled by exterior voices and fears, are not finished enough to be a law unto themselves. . . . It wasn't the terror of these thoughts, but tenderness in answer to his hurried tumble of explanation regarding his coming, that had filled Betty's eyes. He caught the sparkle of a tear in profile, and came to her.

"It's like creating—visibly, without hands, but with thoughts—creating a masterpiece—to see the tears come like that——"

He drew a chair to the bench where she sat, her back to the piano. Helen Quiston was away, as usual, for the forenoon.

"It is creating—another world," she answered steadily.

He stared at her. She saw again that sleepless look.

"You've been a whole month on a lofty ridge—just think of it—fasting and pure expression of self—spiritual self-revelation——"

It seemed to him there was a suggestion in what she said for the new book.

"And now you are down in the meadows again," she finished.

"The earth-sweet meadows—with you."

He could not know what the words meant to her; that there was no quarter in them for her. She did not belong to his ascents.

"Somehow I always think of you as belonging best to the evenings, the hushed earth, the sweetness of the rest-time. You make me remember what to do, and how to do it well. Why, just now you made me see clearly for a second what I must do next. You make me love people better—when I am close to you."

She was not to be carried away by these givings which would have made many a woman content.

"Remember, I have had your letters every day. You are very dear to me up there. You have been down in the meadows—and in the caverns—much. You are not ready to return—even for the evenings. You stand now for austere purity—for plain, ancient, mother's knee ideals. You must not delude yourself. A man must be apart in order to see. You did not begin really to live—until you drew apart."

He felt her stripping his heart. His face lifted in agony, and his eyes caught the picture on the wall of the meeting of Beatrice and Dante. The Florentine woman seemed not to touch the earth; the poet was awed, mystic in the fusion of their united powers. It was fateful that Morning saw the picture at this instant.

"Look," he said, "what the world has from the meeting of that man and woman—an immortal poem!"

"But Beatrice passed on——"

"She became identified with his greater power, Betty. She was one with it——"

"By passing on!"

He arose and lifted her to her feet, and his arms did not relinquish her.

"And you mean that you would pass on? . . . You must not. You must not. We would both be broken and bewildered. I love you. I have come to you. I want to be near—and work with you. I know you all, and shall love you always. I have come to you, and I must stay—or you must come with me——"

Her resistance was broken for the moment. An icy burden fell from her. She clung to him, and tears helped her.

They were together again in the studio that afternoon. Betty Berry was making tea, her strength renewed. Helen Quiston had come and gone. Morning had been away for an hour.

"Strange man," she said, "let us reason together. . . . You are working now for men. That is right, but when you are full of power, when you come really into the finished man you are to be, and all these hard years have healed beyond the last ache—you will work for women. Does it sound strange from me, that the inspiration of the world to-day is with the women? Why, it seems to me that men are caught in the very science of cruelty. And then, the women of to-day represent the men of the future. When one of the preparers of the way brings his gospel to women, he kindles the inspiration of the next generation. But this fire can only come from the solitary heights—never from the earth-sweet meadows——"

He shook his head.

"The men who have done the most beautiful verses and stories about children—have had no children of their own. A man cannot be the father of his country and



the father of a house. The man who must do the greatest work for women must hunger for the *vision* of Woman, and not be yoked with one. . . . It is so clear. It is always so."

"All that you say makes me love you more, Betty——"

"Don't, dear. Don't make it harder for me. . . . It is not I that thrills you. It is my speaking of your work that fills your heart with gladness—the things you feel to do——"

"They are from you——"

"Don't say that. It is not true."

"But I never saw so clearly——"

"Then go away with the vision. Oh, John Morning, you cannot listen to yourself—with a woman in the room!"

He lifted his shoulders, drawing her face to his. "I was going to say, you are my wings," he whispered. "But that is not it. You are my fountain. I would come to you and drink——"

"But not remain——"

"I love your thoughts, Betty, your eyes and lips——"

"Because you are athirst——"

"I shall always be athirst!"

"That is not nature."

He shuddered.

"Do men, however athirst—remain at the oases? Men of strength—would they not long to go? Would they not remember the far cities and the long, blinding ways of the sun?"

"But you could go with me——" he exclaimed.

"That is not nature!"

He was the weaker. "But you have gone alone to the far cities, and the long, blinding ways of the sun——"

"Yes, alone. But with you—a time would come when I could not. We are man and woman. There

would be little children. I would stay—and you could not leave them. . . . Oh, they are not for you, dear. They would weaken your courage. You would love them. At the end of the day, you would want them, and the mother again. . . . The far cities would not hear you; the long, blinding ways of the sun would know you no more——”

“Betty,” he whispered passionately, “how wonderfully sweet that would be!”

“Yes . . . to the mother . . . but *you*—I can see it in your eyes. You would remember Nineveh, that great city. . . .”

Darkness was about them.

“Betty Berry—you would rather I wouldn’t take the train to you again—not even when it seems I cannot stay longer away?”

She did not answer.

“Betty——”

“Yes. . . .”

She left him and crossed to the far window.

“Would you not have me come to you again—at all?”

She could not hold the sentence, and her answer. The room was terrible. It seemed filled with presences that suffocated her—that cared nothing for her. All day they had inspired her to speak and answer—and now they wanted her death. She moved to the ‘cello. Her hands fluttered along the strings—old, familiar ways—but making hardly a sound. . . . If she did not soon speak, he would come to her. She would fail again—the touch of him, and she would fail.

“Betty, is there never to be—the fountain at evening?”

“You know—you know——” she cried out. Words stuck after that. She had not a thought to drive them.

He arose.

"Don't," she implored. "Don't come to me! I cannot bear it."

. . . It was his final rebellion.

"I am not a preparer of the way. I have not a message. I am sick of the thought. I am just a man—and I love you!"

At last she made her stand, and on a different position. "I could not love you—if that were true."

She heard him speak, but not the words. She heard the crackling and whirring of flames. He did not cross the room. . . . She had risen, her arms groping toward him. She felt him approach, and the flames were farther. . . . She must not speak of flames.

"You will go away soon—won't you?" she whispered, as he took her.

"Yes, to-night——"

"Yes—to-night," she repeated.

She was lying upon the couch in the studio, and his chair was beside her.

"No, don't light anything—no light! . . . It is just an hour. . . . I could not think of food until you go. But you may bring me a drink of water. On the way to the train, you can have your supper. . . . I will play—play in the dark, and think of you—as you go——"

She talked evenly, a pause between sentences. There was a tensivity in the formation of words, for the whirring and crackling distracted, dismayed her. Her heart was breaking. This she knew. When it was finished, he would be free. . . . The flames were louder and nearer, as he left for the drink of water. She called to him to light a match, if he wished, in the other room. . . . He was in her room. She knew each step, just where. He was there. It was as if he were finally materialized from her thoughts in the night, her dreaming and writing to him. His hand touched her dresser. She

heard the running water . . . and then it was all red and rending and breathless, until she felt the water to her lips. Always, as he came near, the flames receded.

And out of all the chaos, the figure of the craftsman had returned to him. The world had revealed itself to him as never before in the passage of time. She had given him her very spirit that day, and the strength of all her volition from the month of brooding upon the conception of his Guardian. Literally on that day the new Book was conceived, as many a man's valorous work has begun to be, in a woman's house—her blood and spirit, its bounty.

"This is a holy place to me, this room," he said, the agonies of silence broken. "I can feel the white floods of spirit that drive the world."

She did not need to answer. She held fast to herself, lest something betray her. Darkness was salvation. All that his Guardian had asked was in her work. John Morning told it off, sentence by sentence. It took her life, but he must not know. She thought she would die immediately after he was gone—but, strangely, now the suffering was abated. . . . She was helping. . . . Was not that the meaning of life—to give, to help, to love? . . . Someone had said so.

He lifted her, carried her in his arms, talked and praised her.

"There's something deathlessly bright about you, Betty Berry!" he whispered. "I am going—but we are one! Don't you feel it? You are loving the world from my heart!"

To the door, but not to the light, she walked with him. . . . Up the stairs he strode a last time to take her in his arms.

"We are one—a world-loving one—remember that!"

She did not know why, but as he kissed her—she thought of the pitcher broken at the fountain.

It was all strange light and singing flame. . . .

She was lost in the hall. She laughed strangely. . . .  
She must play him on his way. . . . Someone helped  
her through the raining light—until she could feel the  
strings.



BOOK III  
THE BARE-HEADED MAN





BOOK III.

THE BARE-HEADED MAN

1

THE red head of the little telephone-miss bowed over the switch-board when Morning entered Markheim's. She colored, smiled; all metropolitan outrages of service forgotten. Charley waved furtively from afar; the door to the inner office opened.

"Well?" said the manager.

"Well, Mr. Markheim?"

"You have come too soon."

"I said—five days."

"We read no play in five days."

"It was left here on that basis."

"Nonsense."

"You can give it to me now."

"It is being read now. Your title is rotten. The old one was better."

"That title will grow on you," said Morning, who began to like the interview. "I shall come to take the play to-morrow—unless you decide to keep it and bring it out this Fall——"

"Why did you come to Markheim again? Have you tried all the rest?"

"There was something unfinished about our former brush—I didn't like the feel of it. . . . My play is done over better. Neither copy has been submitted—except to Markheim."

"Your play may be as bad as before."

"Yes. It looks better to me, however."

"You've got a war play again——"

"That first and second act."

"You can't write war. This is not war——"

Morning did not realize the change that had come over him until he recalled the shame and rebellion that had risen in his mind when Markheim had said this before. . . . Something had come to him from Duke Fallows, or from Betty Berry, or from the hill silences. He was a new creature. . . . Must one be detached somewhat from the world in order to use it? This was his sense at the moment: that he could compel the mind before him, reinforced as it was by distaste for everything decent, and manifesting the opinions of other men, including Reeve Kennard's. There was no irritation whatsoever; no pride in being a war-writer, good or bad. Markheim's denial had no significance in the world above or water beneath. He saw, however, that he must change Markheim's idea, and that he must do it by beating Markheim in his own particular zone of activity.

There was a certain fun in this. He arose and stood by the other's chair. The eye-balls showed wider and rolled heavily. The pistol or bomb was never far from his mind. Morning looked down at him, saying quietly:

"You said something like that before, and it wasn't your opinion—it was Reeve Kennard's. I don't object to it exactly, but I want to show you something. You know Reeve Kennard's paper?"

Markheim nodded.

"You know the *World-News* sent him out to the Russo-Japanese war—big expense account, helpers, dress-suits, and all that?"

"I know he was there."

"The same managing editor who sent Reeve Kennard out is still on the desk. He should be in the office now. The number is——"

Morning found it for him hastily, and added: "You call him now."

"I don't want to call him up——"

"But you'd better. Twice you said something that someone told you—and it's troublesome. The short way out is to call him now——"

Morning was tapping the desk lightly. Markheim reached for the extension 'phone. Luckily, the thing was managed—luckily, and through the name of Markheim.

"Ask him who did the story of the battle of Liao-yang for the *World-News*?" Morning ordered.

The question was asked and the answer came back.

"Ask him if it was a good story—and how long."

It was asked and answered.

"Ask him if it was conceded to be the best story of the war published in America."

The talk was extended this time, Markheim explaining why he asked.

"What did he say?" Morning asked.

"He said it was all right," Markheim granted pertly. "Only that there was a very good story from another man on Port Arthur—afterward."

"That is true. There was a heady little chap got into Port Arthur—and came out strong. . . . Now, look here——"

Morning went to the case where a particularly recent encyclopædia was drawn forth. He referred to the war, but especially to the final paragraph of the article, captioned "Bibliography." . . . His own name and the name of his book was cited as the principal American reference. . . . It was all laughable. No one knew better than Morning that such action would be silly among real people.

"You don't see Reeve Kennard referred to, do you—as authority of war-stuff? . . . The point is that you play people get so much counterfeit color and office-

setting—that you naturally can't look authoritatively on the real thing. . . . However, the fact that I know more about the battle of Liaoyang than any other man in America would never make a good play. There's a lot beside in this play—a lot more than at first——”

“They have your play out now—reading it,” Markheim observed.

Morning added: “It's clear to you, isn't it, why Mr. Reeve Kennard didn't care for the John Morning play——?”

Markheim's eyes gleamed. This was pure business. “You had the goods and delivered it in his own office——”

“Exactly——”

“You bother me too much about this play. The title is rotten——”

“You'll like that, when you see Markheim with it. There's a peculiar thing about the word—it doesn't die. It never rests. It's human—divine, too. There's a cry in it—to some happiness, to some sorrow—to the many, hope. . . . It sings. I would rather have it than glory. . . . Listen, *Markheim Offers Compassion*—why, that's a God's business—offering compassion——”

“You feel like a song-bird this afternoon, Mr. Morning——”

“I'll be back to-morrow——”

“Too soon——”

“Can't help it. It's ready. It will be the big word this Winter. You can read it in an hour. I'm off to-morrow—from Markheim. The Winter will clear my slate in this office, whether you take it or not——”

“Come back at noon——”

Charley's sister looked up from her pad. Her swift change of expression to a certain shyness and pleasure, too, in a sort of mutual secret, added to Morning's merriment as he left the building. . . . He wondered con-

tinually that afternoon what had come over him. He had not been able to do this sort of thing before. The astonishing thing was his detachment from any tensivity of interest. It was all right either way, according to his condition of mind. The question was important: Must a man be aloof from the fogging ruck of accepted activities in order to see them, and to manage best among things as they are?

There was the new book, too. Betty Berry had given him the new task. A splendor had come to life—even with the unspeakable sadness of the ending of that day. The beauty of that day would never die. Every phase of her sacrifice revealed a subtle, almost superhuman, faith in him. Was it this—her faith in him—that made him so new and so strong; that made him know in his heart that if the Play were right—it would go in spite of Markheim, in spite of all New York? And if it were not right, certainly he did not want it to go. . . . Markheim and New York—he regarded them that night from his doorstep; then turned his back to the city, and faced the west and the woman.

It broke upon him. She was mothering him. She was bringing to his action all that was real and powerful—fighting for it, against every desire and passion of her own. Her wish for his good was superior to her own wish for happiness. She gave him his work and his dreams. He knew not what mystery of prayer and concentration she poured upon him. . . . This place in which she had never been was filled with her. The little frail creature was playing upon him, as upon her instrument. Moments were his in which she seemed a mighty artist.

And then he saw men everywhere—just instruments—but played upon by forces of discord and illusion. . . . He saw these men clearly, because he had been of them. Such forces had played upon him. . . . He had been buffeted and whipped along the rough ways.

He had looked up to the slaughterers of the wars as unto men of greatness. He had been played upon by the thirsts and the sufferings, by greed and ambition. He had hated men. He had fumed at bay before imagined wrongs; and yet no one had nor could wrong him, but himself.

One by one he had been forced to fight it out with his own devils—to the last ditch. There they had quit—vanished like puffs of nasty smoke. He had stood beneath Reeve Kennard, almost poisoning himself to death with hatred. Pure acknowledgment this, that his life moved in the same scope of evil. . . . He had accepted the power of Markheim, feared it, and suffered over the display of it. Now he found it puny and laughable. He had worked for himself, and it had brought him only madness and shattering of force. He had been brought to death, had accepted it in its most hideous form—and risen over it. . . . His hill was calm and sweet in the dusk. Though his heart was lonely—and though all this clear-seeing seemed not so wonderful as it would be to have the woman with him in the cabin—yet it was all very good. He felt strong, his fighting force not abated.

He had his work. She had shown him that. He would write every line to her. His work would lift him up, as the days of the Play had lifted him—out of the senses and the usual needs of man. He would be with her, in that finer communion of instrument and artist. . . . The world was very old and dear. Men's hearts were troubled, but men's evils were very trifling, when all was understood. He would never forget his lessons. He would tell everyone what miracles are performed in the ministry of pain. . . . He looked into the dark of the west and loved her.

“Well, you are on time,” said Markheim the following noon.

"Yes," Morning said with calmness and cheer.

"We will take the play. I have had it read. . . . We can do no more than bust."

"This Fall—the production?"

"I will give it the *Markheim* in November."

He seemed to be surprised that Morning did not emotionalize in some way. He had expected at least to be informed that "bust" was out of the question, and missed this mannerism of the playwright, now that the thing was his and not the other's. . . . Moreover, Markheim was pleased with the way he had reached the decision. He wanted Morning to know.

"There was that difference of opinion. . . . Do you know what I did?"

Morning couldn't imagine.

"Well," said Markheim, sitting back, hands patting his girth, "those who have nothing but opinions—read your play. They like it; they like it not. It will pay. It will not pay. It is 'revolutionary,' 'artistic,' 'well-knit,' 'good second act'—much rot it is, and is not. Who do you think settle the question?"

"Yourself?"

"Not me—I have no opinion."

"Who then?"

"The friend of no man." It was said with grandeur.

Morning waited.

Markheim leaned forward, beaming not unkindly, and whispered:

"The little one at the switch-board outside the door. She said it was 'lovely.' . . . Oh, she's a sharp little spider."

## 2

**H**ERE is an extra bit of the fabric, that goes along with the garment for mending. . . . Mid-May, and never a sign of the old wound's reopening. Something of Morning's former robustness had spent

itself, but he had all the strength a man needs, and that light unconsciousness of the flesh which is delightful to those who produce much from within. The balance of his forces of development had turned from restoring his body to a higher replenishment.

The mystery of work broke upon him more and more, and the thrall of it; its relation to man at his best; the cleansing of a man's daily life for the improvement of his particular expression in the world's service; the ordering of his daily life in pure-mindedness, the power of the will habitually turned to the achieving of this pure-mindedness. He saw that man is only true and at peace when played upon from the spiritual source of life; therefore, all that perfects a man's instrumentation is vital, and all that does not is destructive. Most important of all, he perceived that a real worker has nothing whatever to do beyond the daily need, with the result of his work in a worldly way; that any deep relation to wordly results of a man's work is contamination.

He lost the habit and inclination to think what he wanted to say. He listened. He became sceptical of all work that came from brain, in the sense of having its origin in something he had actually learned. He remembered how Fallows had spoken of this long ago; (he had not listened truly enough to understand then); how a man's brain is at his best when used purely to receive—as a little finer instrument than the typewriter.

Except for certain moments on the borderland of sleep, Betty Berry was closest to him during his work. His every page was for her eye—a beloved revelation of his flesh and mind and spirit. And the thing had to be plain, plain, plain. That was the law.

How Fallows had fought for that. "Don't forget the deepest down man, John!" . . . Betty Berry and Fallows and Nevin were his angels—his cabin, a place of continual outpouring to them. Few evils were powerful



enough to stem such a current, and penetrate the gladness of giving.

He slept lightly, and was on the verge again and again, almost nightly, in fact, of surprising his own greater activity that does not sleep. He often brought back just the murmur of these larger doings; and on the borderlands he sometimes felt himself in the throb of that larger consciousness which moves about its meditations and voyagings, saying to the body, "Sleep on." It was this larger consciousness that used him as he used the typewriter, when he was writing at his best and his listening was pure. . . . He had been held so long to the ruck that he would never forget the parlance of the people—and not fall to writing for visionaries.

. . . One night he dreamed he went to Betty Berry. . . . He was ascending the stairs to her. She seemed smaller, frailer. Though he was a step or two down, his eyes met hers equally. She was lovelier than anything he had ever known or conceived in woman. Her smile was so wistful and sweet and compassionate—that the hush and fervor of it seemed everywhere in the world. There was a shyness in her lips and in the turn of her head. Some soft single garment was about her—as if she had come from a fountain in the evening. . . . And suddenly there was a great tumult within him. He was lost in the battle of two selves—the man who loved and destroyed, and the man who loved and sustained.

The greater love only asked her there—loved her there, exquisite, apart, found in her a theme for infinite contemplation, as she stood smiling. . . . The other was the love of David, when he looked across the rooftops at Bathsheba, bathing, and made her a widow to mother Solomon. This human love was strong in the dream, for he caught her in his arms, and kissed, and would not let her go, until her voice at last reached his understanding.

*"Oh, why did you spoil it all? Oh, why—when I thought it was safe to come?"*

He had no words, but her message was not quite ended:

*"I should have come to you as before—and not this way—but you seemed so strong and so pure. . . . It is my fault—all my fault."*

She was Betty Berry—but lovelier than all the earth—the spirit of all his ideals in woman. The marvelous thing about it was that he knew after the dream that this was the Betty Berry that would live in spite of anything that could happen to the Betty Berry in the world. He knew that she waited for him—for the greater lover, John Morning, whose love did not destroy, but sustained. . . . She who regarded him in "the hush of expectancy" from the distance of a night's journey, and he who labored here stoutly in the work of the world, were but names and symbols of the real creatures above the illusion of time. . . . So he came to love death—not with eagerness, but as an ideal consummation. Such a result were impossible had he not faced death as an empty darkness first, and overcome the fear of it.

These many preparations for real life on earth in the flesh he was to put in his book—not his adventures, but the fruits of them—how he had reached to-day, and its decent polarity in service. He had been hurled like a top into the midst of men. After the seething of wild energy and the wobblings, he had risen to a certain singing and aspiring rhythm—the whirl of harmony. He told the story in order, day by day. Though it was done with the I's, there was no self-exploitation. John Morning was merely the test-tube, containing from time to time different compounds of experience. And he did it plainly, plainly, plainly, as is the writer's business.

As he watched for Jethro, one morning early in June, he perceived a second figure in the old rig. At the box,

the stranger got out and followed Jethro's arm, directed up the hill toward the cabin, disappeared for a moment in the swail-thicket by the fence, and presently began the ascent, bringing Morning's papers and letters. . . . The stranger was tall and tanned, wore a wide hat and approached with a slim ease of movement. Morning knew he had seen him before, but could not remember until the voice called:

"Hullo—that you, John Morning?"

It was Archibald Calvert, last met during the night-halt in Rosario, Luzon, the correspondent who had ridden with Reeve Kennard, and who had lost *Mio Amigo*. He had always thought rather pleasantly of Archibald Calvert when he thought at all.

"Say—what are you getting set for out here?"

"It's better and cheaper than a hall-bedroom," Morning answered.

"That sounds good. . . . Well, I spent all day yesterday looking for you—first clue, Boabdil—second at Markheim's from a little red-haired girl. . . . The rural man picked me up——"

"I've got some cold buttermilk——"

"Pure asceticism—also a pearl of an idea——"

They sat down together.

"So you made ten thousand dollars out of Liaoyang after you came back. . . . I looked up the story. It was—say, it was a bride, Morning!"

"Thanks. Duke Fallows did a better one in one-tenth the space. The pay-end didn't mean much. I'm not a good bed for money culture. Tell me where you've been, Mr. Calvert."

"Oh, I've been around. Didn't get up to the Russ-Jap stuff. I was down among the Pacific Islands. You know I'm a better tramp than writer. It's five years since I hit New York. . . . They say old Reeve Kennard is doing politics. He'll be back from Washington to-night——"

"Politics, and an occasional dramatic criticism," said Morning.

"You know that never sat easy—that day in Rosario——"

"Didn't it?"

"I was down to Batangas three days later—unpacking saddle-bags, and found *Mio Amigo* No. 1. Deeper down I found its mate. . . . They're common in Luzon as old Barlow knives when we were kids. . . . I made a scene about that knife—with my own deep down in my own duffel. . . . I suppose you've forgotten."

"No—I haven't."

"You were pretty decent about it. It was a nasty thing—even to speak about it as I did. You see, the inscription rather appealed to kid-intelligence in my case, and I thought it was unique, instead of the popular idea of a cheap Filipino knife."

"Kennard took it seriously, didn't he?" said Morning.

"You mean at the time? . . . Yes, I couldn't understand that exactly."

Morning decided not to speak of that day's relation to Tokyo five years later.

"Well," said Calvert, after a pause, "I hunted you up to say I was an ass, and to give you back your knife. The pair have been smelling up my things around the world for a long time."

Morning grasped it eagerly.

Some time afterward, when Calvert arose to go, Morning ventured this much:

"And so you're going to see Reeve Kennard?"

"Yes, to-night. . . . I suppose you two and the others game together from time to time?"

"The fact is, New York isn't very good anchorage for that sort of thing," Morning said.

". . . I was glad when they told me you had put over that big Liaoyang stuff, Morning——"

Morning smiled and took the quick brown hand of the other. Calvert appealed to him, but it couldn't be shown in any way. Calvert was like a good horse, gladly giving evidence of fine feeling, but embarrassed when made much of. . . . He went away blithely—off, for God knows where—but fearlessly on his way.

Morning held the little knife in his hand.

He thought of that hard Philippine service which had seemed so big at the time; of that day when he watched the fat shoulders of Reeve Kennard in the forward sets of horse, Kennard seeming all that greatness can be. He thought of the halt in Rosario, of the lame woman. He looked at the little knife again. . . . He had not really wanted it then, and yet it had cut the strings of his Fates, turning them loose upon him. It had knocked him out of the second Japanese column five years afterward, and given him instead Duke Fallows and Liao-yang. It had given him that great battle, Lowenkampf, the Ploughman, Eve, the sorrel mare—the journey to Kou-pangtse—the blanket at Tongu—the deck-passage—the *Sickles*, Ferry—and Nevin—even Noyes and Field.

It had given him the Armory, and Betty Berry.

He held it fast.

It had given him money, fame, and New York for a day—the opinion from Kennard that killed the first writing of *Compassion*—the mood to see Charley and his sister at the switch-board, which brought him to Betty Berry again. . . . Out of these had come all that was real and true of this hour. It had given him the slums and the leper conflict—Nevin's cure and the fasting—the real Ploughman—the better *Compassion*—the cabin in which he sat, his place of Initiation. It had given him the triumph over death—the illumination of love and labor—the listening life of the soul, and the vision of its superb immortality.

He held it fast and looked hard at the little friend. The brass handle sent up a smell of verdi-gris from his hot hand.

## 3

**T**HIS was John Morning's splendid summer. He was up often at two or three in the morning. Thoughts and sentences of yesterday, now cleared and improved, thronged his mind, as he made coffee. He learned that a man may write the first half of a book, but be used as a mere slave of the last half. And yet, to be the instrument of a rush of life and ideas, the latter becoming every hour more coherent and effective, was a privilege to make a man sing. And to increase, at the same time, in the realization of the courage and tenderness and faith of a woman who waited; to feel the power of her in the work; to work for her; to put his love for her in the work, all the strength of her attraction—this was living the life of depth and fullness.

Times when he looked out of the doorway, and the elms were shaping against the flowery purple of day-break, and the robin beginning thirstily—his eyes smarted with tears at the beauty of it all, the privilege of work, and the absolute rightness of the whole creation, in which a man can't possibly lose, after he has heard his real self speak. He loved life and death in such moments, and knew there was a Betty Berry in the waiting studio, and another over the Crossing. (Had he not glimpsed her in his dream at the top of the stairway?)

So his book prospered, enfolding the common man. It had something for every man who had not come so far as he. He was *of* them, in every understanding among them, different only in that it was his business to write by the way. His old failures furnished the studies of distintegrating forces. Personally, he was detached

from them, as his writing showed, except for an intellectual familiarity—as detached as from the worn clothing he had left here and there around the world. One by one, the constructive and destructive principles of the average man were shown divided against each other in the arena of mind—and how the friends and loves had come to the balance. Nevin was in the fabric, the little Englishman at Tongu, Fallows and the Woman—not in name, (there was no name but John Morning's), but they were all there, lifting and laughing and drawing, as friends and loves do in the life of a man. Again and again he cried out that the peace and sweet reason of things he had found was of their bringing—that without them he would have been lost again and again by the way.

. . . The Summer days passed magically. Markheim was beginning to talk rehearsals. He had found the right man to play the Ploughman. . . . Late-September. The letters from Betty Berry were rarer, thinner. They troubled him. . . . One morning he watched Jethro's rig approach—a golden morning, and the cattle were feeding down in the meadow. He had seen the picture a thousand times—the cattle on the slope—yet it was never so real to him, nor had he hungered for the face of Betty Berry as now. . . . Jethro stopped at his box, and he hurried down. There was a letter from her—and one from Russia, too. The first did not free his mind from sorrow—though the effort was plain to do this very thing. . . . The letter from Fallows filled the day:

“ . . . I knew, John, if I sat down to write, it would set free all my longing to go back to you. So I have put it off from week to week. . . . From the *Western States* I followed our old trail to Tokyo, then via Peking, to Shanhaikwan, Koupangtse, Liaoyang. . . . I stopped there, and went around by the coal-fields, where the millet had been planted all over again.

I talked over the battle with the Japanese. They are just as interested as ever in what the other man knows. Though the big battle seemed like another life to me, it was their immediate yesterday. They would do it all over again. The Ploughman seemed to walk with me; the rest was boyish babble. . . . I found Lowenkampf—white and quiet—but the woman loves him, if Russia does not. The little boy is a man-soul. That's the story—except that he sent his love to you. The three are off to South America, and all is well. . . . Up in the Bosk hills, I followed the Summer. The old man is gone. He had his sausages at the last. . . .

“I was needed, but the little farm was all right. The neighbor had done his part. There was enough for all. . . . How simple, one little vanity of a man such as I am, and this family has enough and to spare; food and firelight, good-will, their hope of heaven brought down to comprehension again—all for so little, John. If men only knew the joy of it—how it lasts and augments, how it sustains the man who does it—to weave a mesh of happiness for the poor. The fact is, he has to watch very carefully, or he'll get caught in the mesh himself.

“The little boy came running to meet me. I think he ran to meet me somewhere before. He is different from all the others—except for that touch of the old mother which he has, and that something about the Ploughman. He was white and all eyes when I picked him up. They said he wasn't well, but in three days he was sound again—color breaking through. To think that my coming could do that for any living soul—I.

“The old Mother. . . . She was just waiting for me—lingering until I came—watching down the road in the sunlight. We talked a little. She spoke softly of her soldier-son. It was only a few days. . . . It all came from her, John—the battle of Liaoyang so far as its meaning to me. She was the light on the Ploughman's brow that made a different man of me. He never



dreamed of messages to the world of men, nor the passion to serve men—but he had his mother's faith and something of her vision. That made him different from other Russian soldiers, so that I could see. The little boy Jan will bring it to life again. Your play goes straight back to her. There's everlasting quality in being a mother like that. I think it was the fourth morning—that I suddenly began to listen attentively to what she was saying. It was about us all—intimately about her soldier-son. . . . The younger mother came in—her sad, weary face different. . . . She went out, and returned with her shoes on. . . . Suddenly I knew that the old sweet flower was passing. Why, she was gone before I knew it—smiling up at the saints from my arms. . . . I heard the little boy coming quickly—knew his step as I would know yours, John. I seemed to wait for his hand upon the door. I saw him, and he saw us—came forward on tip-toe, and we were all together——”

Morning didn't read the rest just then. It seemed one of the finest things he had ever known—Duke Fallows preserving the old mother and the others in their conviction that he was just a peasant like the Ploughman.

## 4

**F**ROM that April night after Morning left, when Helen Quiston found her wandering in the halls, and asking in a childish way to be taken to the 'cello (saying that her father had hidden it from her in a strange place), until now in mid-September, Betty Berry had not left the studio-apartment. The real break-down had begun a month before the high day in which Morning came; perhaps on the very night his Guardian had called. She had scarcely played or practiced since then; she read nothing, talked to no one except Helen. Morn-

ing had noted her anxiously early on the day of his call at the studio, but such power had come in the flashes of those hours, and so high was she enthroned and illumined in his own mind at the end, (in which she had kept to the darkness), that he had not realized the blight that had touched her life.

Helen Quiston had long loved the woman. She knew much that the Doctor did not. It was she who read the letters which in certain moments of the day Betty hastily penned. It was as if for a moment in a long gray day, a ray of watery sunlight broke through the cloud-banks. In the momentary shining of her mind, Betty would write to Morning. Many of the letters were impossible. Certain of these letters would have brought the lover by the first train. Even Betty had a sense of this and relied upon the music-teacher. Here and there among the notes, too, was a wisp of the old sweet spirit. It was a wonderful conception to Helen Quiston: that all but these had gone to replenish the creative fire of a lover who knew well what his lady had given, but not what it meant to her. Just as surely as the Hindoo woman offers herself upon the funeral pyre with the body of her mate, Betty Berry had given her spirit to the living. A hundred times the singing teacher had heard these words from white lips that smiled:

*"We are one—a deathless, world-loving one!"*

And often she heard this queer verse from the Persian:

*"Four eyes met. There were changes in two souls.  
And now I cannot remember whether he is a man and I  
a woman,*

*'Or he a woman and I a man. All I know is,  
There were two: Love came, and there is one. . . ."*

"Don't forget to remind me that I must tell him I am happy," Betty would say. . . . When a letter was finally finished and sealed, she would lean back, shutting her eyes with a sigh, saying: "Now read me his

that came to-day and yesterday." . . . And afterward: "Isn't it wonderful, Helen, dear? Isn't it quite wonderful? You are so dear to understand."

"Self-destruction is the first danger," the Doctor had said in the early days. "That's why she should be in a sanatorium under professional vigilance. Each case is individual. She might take a sudden dislike to the saintliest of nurses—even to you. The fever will not last, but it is a long battle. Shock, overwork, a terrible disappointment—such are the causes. Singular sweetness of disposition, as in this case, is very rare. The thing that goes with this usually is 'the frozen stare'—hours motionless, looking at the wall——"

Morning's letters were like white-hot fragments from his forge—roughly fashioned, but still seething with force. Helen Quiston felt that there was a splendid singing in that forge; that a man's voice attuned with God and the world was raised in the morning; that silence drew on as the concentration of the task deepened; that there was singing in the evening again. Aliment for the soul of the music teacher, these letters. She would have fought to obey Betty Berry against the will of the Doctor and nurse had it been necessary.

One of these September-morning letters was particularly joyous with enthusiasm for Betty Berry's gift to him. He told again how it wove into, beautified and energized his work.

"Literally I thank the stars for you," Helen Quiston read. "Sometimes it comes to me—as if straight from you—strength that I feel with my limbs, strength that means health. It surges through my veins like magic—so that my eyes smart with tears. I speak your name again and again in thankfulness for love fresh every day, and for the pity for men in my heart——"

Betty was not following. It was frequently so in the first reading.

"Free," she repeated softly, from a thought of yesterday's letter. "He said I was free. He said I never explained——"

"Yes, dear, he was writing of that night he came to the theatre. I'll get the letter for you to-night. He said that you belonged to the risen world, the woman's world—that you trusted your vision—did not seek to explain, but rejoiced. He said you had no guile, that you asked nothing, and were unafraid. He means to give the world a portrait of the risen woman—a portrait of you."

Betty Berry did not answer. Mention of that night at the theatre invariably affected her to silence.

"I must hurry away for a little while, but I will finish this," Helen added, reading on:

"In the evenings, the greater power of you comes over my life like a spiritual rain. I remember the art of your hands, the sweet mystery of your lips; the tenderness of your eyes and words; but over it all—the inner power of you, strong as truth, pure as truth, wise as the East, and sweet as the South. It is the spirit of you that has come to me—your singing, winging, feminine spirit. It has made me whole. . . . Do you know, I used to think the world would be made better by force, by arraignment, by revelation of evil. You have shown me the better way of making the world better by loving it. That's woman's way, the Christ's way. . . . And when I think that you have given me this blessed thing, this finest fruit of earth—your love, created out of trial and loneliness, your love, so pure and true and valorous—when I think that it is mine, and how you fought through the long day to give me this, *and only this*—when I think of the splendor of that day's work of yours, I kneel to you, and to the spirit of the world—in the wood, in the hut, before the door, under my elms, under the stars,—I kneel to you and the Source of you. The

peace that comes, and the power—this, is my passionate wish for you! I would restore it to you magnified.”

Helen Quiston read all this a second time that September morning, although her pupils were waiting. . . . It was to her like the song from a strong man's house.

“You are rich and elect, Betty!” she cried. “You have been a woman and *wanted* love. You have finished your work at night, alone, and realized that there was no one—your arms tired, your throat tired, your brain and soul tired and heart-lonely—and there was no one. How rich you are now! I think a woman is rich who can say: ‘In London or Tokyo or New South Wales there is one who loves me—who may be thinking at this moment about me—who wishes I were there, or he were here; whose heart's warmth stretches across the distance and makes the world a home, because he is in the world. . . . It would seem to me that I should be exultant to-day—if there was such a one for me. It seems—if I could see him in a year, even if I could not see him at all, *and he were somewhere*—I should be all new and radiant, born again. . . . But you, Betty dear—oh, think what you have—what you are giving!”

Betty's eyes were shut. There was a gray line around the faint color of the lips, and she was pale as a candle-flame in the morning sun.

“I wish you could stay with me, dearest,” she whispered. “It is too much for me—when I am alone. But when you are here, what you say and what you see—makes me believe. . . . And you must tell me what to write in answer to this—to satisfy him. I shall hold it in my hand, and rest——”

“I'll come back this afternoon. We'll have supper, and the letter will be mailed. You'll know what to say then——”

She hurried away, lest her heart break. The tired, emotionless voice trailed after her. And all day she

heard Betty's voice among the unfinished voices, and saw the spiritless clay of her heart's friend sitting in deathly labor below, tormented by the phantom of a will—like a once glorious empire become desolate, a foolish scion upon the throne.

## 5

HELEN QUISTON was the brain of the studio, the eyes and fingers—even, in part, the spirit of the place that John Morning loved. It was a letter of hers that John Morning answered with this paragraph:

"I shut my eyes after the first reading—and it seemed to me I went sailing. There were many voyagers and many islands—but I found *my Island*. It called to me and I knew it was for me. The voyagers sailed on past the curving inlets and the arrowed points—but I sailed home. I found the fountains, the crags, the echoes, the virgin springs, the mysterious meeting places of the land and sea, the enchanted forest where the fairies are—and the sun was rising. It was thus I answered the calling mystery of your spirit. . . ."

She was glad that his mind turned to the actual memory picture of Betty Berry, as he finished:

"I do love the woman that moves about the world, the woman others see—the lips that tremble, the eyes that fill with tears so swiftly over some loveliness, and so rarely over her own sorrow; the instant-enfolding mind, the listening and the vitality—but it seems that I love in a greater way the heart that called to its lover without words—who fared forth to meet her lover and gave her soul."

More and more Helen Quiston perceived that John Morning was becoming sufficient unto himself—the larger lover, loving the world through his lady, and needing less, even in thought, her hands and kisses and emotions. She saw steadily that which Duke Fallows had

made Betty Berry see for a night. She did not see it as clearly as Betty Berry saw it that night, but she beheld an enduring radiance from it, because her body was not in the wreck of sacrifice. She had a woman's sense of the large relation of things, and a woman's faith. The misery of life as she had met it, the disorder, monotony, and gray sorrow of it all, was her profound assurance of another and brilliant side to the shield. She wanted nothing for herself in these particular instances. For Betty Berry she saw a swift transfer to a certain indefinite perfection, no less attractive because it was unlimned in her mind. Her own happiness, her great privilege, was to be third in this miracle of a man and woman passing beyond in a truly royal way. There was a mystic quality that suited her mind in the coming of the Guardian to Betty Berry's room, and in the fact that John Morning would never know of this. It was like the coming of some Michael or Gabriel. From what she knew of John Morning's work, she could believe in the planetary promise that the Guardian seemed to see; indeed, she could have believed in it with less evidence, because the Guardian said so. . . . Her particular dream was for the man to appear who would make women see what it was in their hands and hearts to do for the coming race. She dreamed of a man to come with words to women that would be reflected upon the brows of children to be, that would help to fashion the latent dreams into great children. She believed it was the agony of being childless that put this dream into her own mind, and she believed that the world-ignition could only come from a man who knew the same agony. . . . So she listened raptly to the singing from the forge; and more and more, with almost unspeakable excitement, she realized that the voice of John Morning was slowly and surely taking to itself the authority and harmony which his Guardian had promised.

He wrote often now of the rehearsals of *Compassion*,

of his large fears and small satisfactions in them. He was always glad to get back to the cabin and the Book. . . . That book—some of her own inner life would be in it. She had given in the letters everything she dared. Her tears were all shed; there was dry burning in her eyes, for what Betty Berry had given to that Book. . . . Now in mid-September it was done, all but a month's chiseling and polishing. It would be given to the publisher two weeks before the first appearance of *Compassion* at the *Markheim* the first week in November. . . . She dared not think what would happen when the Book was done, and the destiny of the play established. . . . A letter from Morning at this time contained for Helen Quiston one winged, triumphant sentence. She was reading aloud to Betty Berry:

"It was straight, clean going, right to the end of the book. . . . It is hard-held. It is kind. It laughs. It goes after the deepest-down man. . . . You have to reach almost self-effacement to associate with fine ideas and to get to the front in service. . . . How hard it was to make me see that the real world is not over there among writers and publishers and drama-producers, but everywhere among the hearts of the poor!

"And, oh, Betty Berry, it isn't the book—it's the life that counts. You have made me live. You earned your strength alone—suffering alone through the years. That's the highest honor that can come to man or woman in this world—to be chosen for such years as you have known. It comes only to the strong—the strength to stand alone. The world bows sooner or later before such character. Men feel it, though their eyes be shut.

"There is a certain excellence in the honor of standing alone. Alone, man or woman is either ahead or behind the crowd. In the latter case, he is imbecile or defective, and God is with him. . . . God is in the forward solitudes, too. What a splendor about standing in the full light! The crowd cannot get it. The crowd



keeps the light from itself. There the maiming is, the suffering, the cruelty; there the light is divided, and the warmth is the low heat of men, not the grand primal vitality of the Sun. There in the crowd, Apparition and Appearance take the place of the Real. . . . Now and then, in the torturing passage of the crowd, the landmark of some pioneer is reached, and the cry goes up, 'We are on the right road, for that man passed here!' The name of the pioneer becomes part of the crowd's impedimenta. Perhaps he smiles from the Other Side, not because the crowd has found *his* trail—he may have wanted that once, though not long—but looking back upon his greater birth, he smiles—the place where he emerged and stood alone on the grand frontier. . . . You have made me strong enough to believe that you and I may go away up into the coolness beyond the senses—even in this life——”

Helen Quiston stopped. That last was the final sanction. The Guardian knew, when he chose John Morning. It was the one thought she had hardly dared formulate for him, and which she had awaited ardently during the late weeks.

“He means that a woman can go, too!” she cried, trembling, forgetful even of Betty Berry; “he is on the path—higher, higher—and yet, he says that women, too, can go that way alone——”

Betty Berry frowned. “What does he mean by going alone—about a man and a woman going alone?” She was suffering to understand, angry that the other understood.

“He says that the woman may also go alone to that Eminence! No man—no human man—has ever said that before. Men think of *men passing* upward. People caught in their desires have forever lied to themselves, trying to believe that man and woman can go *together*. . . . He says here——” her eye darted on to read:

“‘Men and women gain their strength to reach that

Eminence by being alone—by loving alone!’ You taught him that. . . . Don’t you see, dearest, it is the beginning of his real message? You gave it to him—and what a message it is for you and for—even for me——”

“But woman is the serpent,” Betty Berry muttered.

Helen arose to turn on a wall light. Her hand fumbled. Her eyes could not be brought down from that lofty plateau. A strange peace had come into the loneliness of her life. She wanted to tell it everywhere—to Nuns of the World. . . . It had been a man’s world so long—that this thought had never come. Always in the world’s thought and art—the flesh of woman had kept her down in the dusks and valleys. Sons climbed; lovers left their maids to climb . . . but only the Gods knew all the time *that daughters could go*.

Betty was silent. It had become the habit of her life not to speak when the mists thickened. . . . The picture of Dante and Beatrice was in the light. Helen pointed to it:

“Who would think of saying that Beatrice, who was the Way—did not share the vision and the consciousness?” she asked softly.

Betty shut her eyes. The other returned with eager love and sat down at her knees. “And now I will read the last. Just think how clearly he sees:

“‘The world is so dear to me because of you. I am so freshly conscious of its roundness, of the profile of its coasts as seen from above; of its light and darkness, the sharpness of sun in the retreating gray, of its skies and its peaks, the last to darken and the first to answer the morn. . . . I put the candle away just now, and in the darkness I saw the Earth from above—not from afar, but from some space nearer than the moon. I saw it all at once. The moon shining upon one side, the sun shining upon the other—a golden side, a silver side. . . . And I saw you afterward—not as you are in the studio, but as a shadowed, quiet figure among moonlit

ruins. You were calm, and moved silently here and there. Ruins were about you, yet you seemed to know the things to do. What does it mean?"

"What does it mean, Helen?" Betty repeated.

The other's eyes filled with tears. The question might have come from a little old lady of eighty, whose house of life was locked, all but the sitting-room.

"It's just a dream, dear," she whispered.

"There are no ruins about me—when you are here," Betty said.

"Ruins, dearest? . . . No, gardens and living temples——"

Betty arose, and moved slowly up and down the studio, then stood by her chair. The impulse even to lift her hand was unusual. She moved now with difficulty, but was not conscious of it. The room was dark, except for the one wall-light. Helen went to her side, helped her at last to the chair. Betty's face was deathly, but there was a mournful reasonableness in her eyes, a faint grasp of actuality, that the other had not seen for weeks. The old enemies, memory and hope, were in feeble conflict.

"Do you think he means that I am not well?"

"He was only expressing a dream-picture. . . . I'm sure he hasn't interpreted it——"

"But he will. That comes afterward——"

Betty was either better or worse. . . . The Doctor came. As he was leaving, Helen walked to the stairs with him.

"Yes, there is a change," he said.

"You think it is good?"

"Yes. . . . It's been nearly six months. Yes, I think it is good. She would have been dead without you, Miss Quiston. I don't know what you do—but you keep her from the engrossing mania."

"She has some strength, Doctor?"

"It is all a matter of will at this stage. All along we have battled to keep her somehow nourished."

Helen went back to the studio. Betty was on her feet again. The nurse was at hand, but she had never been able to involve herself in the patient's understanding. She left the room now, anticipating the inevitable request.

"Do you think, Helen—that as he finishes his work—more and more—the ruins will come back to mind?"

## 6

THE Summer was done; the book had been ten days out of Morning's hand; the final rehearsals were engrossing and painful, and the letters from the hill-cabin, though buoyant, were not so frequent. . . . Service for men—service for men! The words seemed integrated into the life of the man. There was something herculean in his striving. The long Summer had ripened the harvest. Conceptions which had been vague and dreamy in the first letters were ready at his hand now, daily expressions of his work. Helen Quiston, so long dream-fed, trembled at the thought that she had something to do with a giant's making.

It never occurred to her that the things so real in her mind were at least an age distant from the interests of the world. She did not stop to think that the drama so vital and amazing to her would be out of the comprehension even of the decent doctor who came to the studio day after day. Not once did it enter her mind that the world would regard her as heartless and fanatic for her strength in so ruthlessly holding her closest friend to the sacrifice. Her problem now was what to do with John Morning after the first night of the play, and the report upon his book was in. She was afraid he would come. He would see Betty Berry—see what her giving

had done. He would learn that it was she, Helen Quiston, who had given him the peace in which to find the larger consciousness; her letters, in Betty Berry's hand, that had filled the distances with peace for him.

She had no thought for John Morning except as an instrument. It was something the way Duke Fallows had thought of him at the last. Either one would have sacrificed themselves, but they were not called. Only Betty Berry loved him for himself, and to her was the altar. They loved him for the future, and guarded him as the worker-bees guard the queen because she is potentially the coming race.

And this was the miracle: John Morning at his work had passed the need of the kiss of woman. He had been tided over the grand crossing by the love of Betty Berry. Receiving it now, he did not hold it for himself, but gave it forth in service to men. . . . There was something cosmic about this to Helen Quiston.

Breathless expectancy in the studio on the early November evening of *Compassion's* first performance at the *Markheim*. Though nothing of the sort had been arranged, Helen Quiston expected a telegram after the Play. It was not yet cold, but an east wind had been rising since dark, and there was tension in the sounds and shaking everywhere. Betty had, for her, a very keen sense of the importance of the night to the man in New York.

"I feel as if I had lived, Betty," her friend whispered. "Oh, what must it be to you?"

"I feel that I have died," the other murmured.

Though she rested better and accepted food with less reluctance, (the doctor declaring himself satisfied with the progress of the past six weeks), it had been the hardest period for Helen Quiston. Something was in Betty's mind that was not confided. Often in the evening she showed a preference for being alone. Helen feared for

a time that the other might write a letter without her supervision, but as there was no change in the tenor of Morning's replies, the outpouring of his thankfulness in no way diminished, the only conclusion was that Betty at least had not mailed such a one. She had taken sudden dislikes to several different nurses in turn. When she wanted anything there was a terrible concentration about it. Helen and the doctor and all concerned were drawn into the vortex.

"It's the way she used to practice," her friend said.

"Miss Quiston——" began the doctor.

"Yes."

"Oh, it doesn't matter. I was just thinking—are you so real to all your friends?"

"I have no friend like Betty."

"That eases my mind."

"Why?"

"A few friends like that and there wouldn't be any singing teacher."

Helen Quiston realized fully for the first time that the doctor was exactly a human being, having the various features of the species.

They were startled by a crash in the inner room. The nurse entered quickly to announce that a flower-pot containing a fuchsia had fallen from the window-sill.

"The plant is in ruins," she said.

Betty rose immediately. *Ruins*—the word was a fiery stimulant to her. In a few moments she ceased her pacing, saying that she was utterly weary. Helen, though leaving for the room she occupied, a flight above, could but remark upon the gleaming intensity of Betty's eyes, and the restless leaping of her hands. . . .

The nurse came to her. Betty went with her into the inner room. In the next fifteen minutes, the patient was more or less alone, while the studio couch, upon which the nurse was accustomed to rest, was being pre-

pared. Unwatched, her movements quickened, a queer, furtive smile played upon her lips, and certain actions altogether uncommon occupied her concentrated attention. The key was quietly removed from the door between the studio and the living-room; a large bundle was carried from a closet-shelf to the rear window and tossed out. From behind the books in a small case near the reading-lamp a purse was produced; and finally, when the nurse was at the farthest end of the studio, Betty drew a large, sharp knife from the same hiding-place, and with astonishing quiet and force severed the telephone wires just beneath the bell-box, fastened to the wall close to the floor. The knife was returned to its hiding-place. The nurse joined her, and Betty, at the studio door, suddenly sank into a chair with a cry of exhaustion. The other ran to her.

“It is nothing! Bring some water——”

The nurse had not reached the medicine-case in the bath, when the patient sprang up and locked the intervening door of the apartment, leaving the woman inside with a “dead” telephone.

For the first time in half a year, Betty left the studio, carefully closing the main door. Out the back way, she found her parcel, and in the windy darkness put on the rain-coat, traveling hat, veil, gloves and shoes it had contained, departing breathlessly through the alley gate.

For a long time the hammering upon floors and walls could not be located in the studio-building. The outer door of Betty’s apartment was tried, but found locked; and since there was no response to the bell, nothing came of the offerings of the earlier Samaritans. Much time was occupied by the nurse in trying to call the telephone-exchange. A stranger in the street was finally persuaded, from the upper window, to find the janitor of the building and send him to the Quiston studio. Master keys set the nurse free.

Helen Quiston first notified the Doctor, who came

hastily. The story of the nurse was explicit as a hospital report.

"Is your car here, Doctor?" Miss Quiston asked presently.

"Yes."

"Will you take me down-town? I'll be ready in a moment."

"Gladly."

"The Doctor was informed in a tense but controlled voice that the patient was doubtless at this moment upon a certain east-bound train. "Betty left here a few minutes after nine," Helen added. "The train I'm thinking of left at ten-five. It is now eleven. . . . Oh, I wonder what she had on? She was dressed when I left her—shirt-waist, black skirt, house-slippers——"

Five minutes' search and thinking on the part of Miss Quiston uncovered the fact that Betty's rain-coat and a certain small traveling hat were missing. . . . Nothing was positively established at the station.

"I must send a telegram, Doctor," Helen said.

It was to Morning at his rural-delivery address. Her heart sank with fear lest the message fail to reach him, until it was finally handled by the post-office.

"There's nothing further to do," she said hopelessly.

Night brought no news, nor the early morning. At nine-thirty o'clock, Helen Quiston was leaving the studio for the morning's work, when she heard a light, swift step on the stairs—someone coming up at least three steps at a time. The hall-door was half-swung. Helen stood waiting. . . . Now a stranger was at the doorway, hesitating, yet expectant. His brow was tanned, as if he had walked bare-headed in the sun. His gray eyes were remarkably clear and very kind. For a second or two they stood face to face, forgetting to speak.

"Where is Betty Berry?" It was a demand, yet gently spoken.

"Are you—are you John Morning?"



"Yes. . . . Where is she?"

"I think she has gone to you—I do not know, but I think she has gone to the hill-cabin——"

"Are you her friend?"

"Yes—I am Miss Quiston."

"When did she go?"

"Last night. I telegraphed you——"

He came close to her. His hand upon her shoulder drew her to a chair, and he brought another near. "I will not stop to ask questions," he said heavily. "You tell me all——"

"What of the play?"

"I don't know—I left before it was done to come here. . . . She is ill—go on——"

The story faltered at first, but the gray eyes steadied her. Toward the end she talked swiftly, coherently. She winged over the one certain cause of Betty's illness. . . . When she stopped, it seemed to her that some mighty machinery was whirring below, its vibrations in the floor and walls.

He arose, stood beside her—all the light and reason gone from his face. For several seconds he stood there, his left hand swiftly tapping her shoulder. The powers of the man were afar—miles away upon his hill. This was just a tapping blind man in the room. . . .

"I must go. I have no words now. . . . She is there. It must be nearly ten now. I must hurry to her."

The engines in the house flagged and were silent.

The woman stood where he had left her, smiling.

## 7

**B**ETTY held her purse tightly in her hand, and certain thoughts were held as tightly in her brain, as she pressed against the wind. . . . It was something like going to a distant concert engagement in the night.

. . . Her limbs were uncertain, and there was a constant winging in her breast, as though it were the cage of a frantic bird. She did not mind. She could forget it—if only her eyes remained true. For the first time in months she was on her own strength, her own will. There was a sharp distress in the responsibility, but also an awakening of force.

The wind whipped her breath away, yet she liked the wild freedom of it—if only she could continue to see and remember what to say. The studio was a hideous blackness that drove her from behind. This was a new and consuming hatred. The two squares to the large uptown hotel where a cab was readily obtainable were long as a winter night; and the tension to remember seemed destroying her by the time she found a driver. She told him the station and the train.

“Plenty of time, Ma’am,” he said.

Her eyes filled with tears. It was true, then, that there was such a station, such a train, that there was time, and nothing had betrayed her. “I must not speak; I must not speak,” kept warning in her mind; “but he is so good to me!”

Now she felt the cold, as she rested a moment before the new ordeal at the station—destination, tickets, the Pullman, not to fall, not to speak any but the exact words. . . . The driver helped her out. Everything was familiar, but miraculously large. . . . She gave the man extra money, and the faintest, humblest “Thank you!” escaped her. He whistled a porter for her.

“The ticket window,” she said. And now she need only follow. It was warmer. It would be warm in the Pullman. . . . She took the young colored man’s arm. He turned with good nature.

“I have been ill,” she said. It was frightened from her lips.

“There is plenty of time, Miss. I’ll see you through to the berth—the ten-five—yes’m.”

The quick tears started again, and an aching lump in her throat. She wanted to cry out her thankfulness. She wanted to be told again and again—that all this was not a dream, from which she would awaken in that place of death. The value of her veil awed her; and it was *she* who had thought of it. Could it really be true that she had forgotten nothing? Would she actually arrive at her journey's end?

The porter procured berth and tickets, and now he assured her that her train was ready. She followed him through interminable distances, down countless stairs; she watched and listened critically, as he delivered both tickets to the Pullman conductor. All she had to do was to follow, to say nothing and to pay. With what thankfulness did she pay; and with what warming courtesy were her gifts received. Surely the world was changed. It had become so dear and good. . . . She had a far-off vision of a peremptory Betty Berry of another world, striding to and fro among men and trains and cities, giving her commands, expecting obedience, conferring gratuities according to rigid principle.

The car-porter was more wonderful than any—an old Southern darkey, with little patches of gray beard, absurdly distributed. A homing gentleness was in his voice, and his smile was from a better world. . . . There had been another porter like him somewhere.

"She goes clear through," the station porter said, "and she's been sick."

"Ah'll see the young Miss clar' through," the old man drawled. "Just depen' on me, Miss. Sit right down here—berth'll be ready right smaht."

She did not sleep, but she was warm and not uncomfortable. She dared think a little of the end of the journey, but there was so much to do in the morning, so much to keep in mind. She held fast to her purse. In her dependence, the magic of it was like a strange discovery.

In the early morning, the porter brought her coffee with some hot milk and toast. The wind had long since been left behind, but a cold rain was falling. She would be cold. The terminal was reached. The old man bore her forth. There was something merciful and restoring in his gentle gratitude. A station porter led her to the Hackensack car.

She thought of breakfast on the way, but forgot it again upon reaching Hackensack, where she was directed to the post-office.

She wrote the address of John Morning and asked shiveringly at the stamp window if there was any way in which she could be delivered there.

The clerk could not see if she were laughing under the veil.

"The rural carrier knows the way," she added. "I'd be willing to pay well——"

The clerk craned his head back through the office, and called:

"Jethro!"

A large, dusty man came forward with the air of having just breakfasted. He took the slip containing the address from her hand.

"The lady wants to go with you, Jethro——"

The rural carrier tilted his spectacles benignly to regard her.

"Bless me—even been there?"

"No—but letters go safely——"

"I rather think they do—since I take 'em. Is this your writing?"

The place was darkening, suffocating to her. "Yes . . . if you would only take me. Five, ten dollars—oh, I should be so glad to pay anything I have——"

The carrier penetrated the veil.

"Just sit down by the heater, Lady," he said in a lowered tone. "We'll get there, and it won't cost you five

or ten dollars, neither. I know where you want to go, and I know who you are, if I'm not mistaken. Lizzie and I will get you there——”

She turned quickly, for the tears were coming. . . . Could it really be that she had remembered everything? Was she really going to him, and this the last stage of the journey? The heart of the large, dusty man had radiated so suddenly upon her. She was not afraid of him, but she must not faint nor speak until she was away from the others. Very still she sat by the heater, praying for strength, praying that it was not all a dream. . . .

“Miss Betty Berry!”

There was an instant in which the call had but a vague meaning; then shot home to her the hideous fear of being taken back. She was close to screaming, yet it was only the rural-carrier coming.

“Yes?” she said, clearing her throat.

“I thought I couldn't be wrong,” he said. “I've brought a good many letters addressed to you back to town from the place you're going, and carried a good many out yonder in this writing of yours. . . . Lizzie and me are ready, Miss.”

As they stepped out the rear door, he touched her arm reflectively, and re-entered to bring a hairy black robe. The vehicle, of a vanished type, was gray even in the rain, and cocked to one side from the sagging of years, where the carrier sat. Betty's weight did not visibly impress the high side. He tucked the hairy robe about her, the mail-bags at her feet, picked up the lines, and lo! they moved.

“Lizzie ain't very showy on knee action, Miss Berry,” he said, “but along about half-past eleven, when we get there, you'll remark she's stiddy.”

It was only ten now. . . . Mud and miles and mail-boxes; dragging moments, and miles and cold rain. . . . She had to talk a little. The journey of the

night was nearest, and she told how good the train-men had been to her.

"You haven't traveled much, Miss, I take it?" he said softly.

"Oh, no." Then distantly again she remembered a Betty Berry of concert seasons—on the wing from city to city. It was all too remote for speech. At one house a woman came forth with tea and sandwiches. Betty was grateful for the warm drink and wanted to pay, but the carrier pushed back her hand and tucked her in again.

"Guess this is going to be a surprise for the bare-headed man?" he asked.

"Yes."

"He's your young man, then?"

"Yes."

He seemed relieved. "He won't be staying out here much longer—not likely—though we do have a spell of good weather in November mostly."

Often she lost every sense of distance and identity. The lapses grew longer toward the end, and when she did not answer, Jethro thought she had fallen asleep. . . . A long stretch at last, barren of mail-boxes. . . . When he finally drew up, she followed his eyes to her lover's name upon the tin by the roadside. Then he pointed beyond the low near trees and hollows. It was all desolate; the Fall tints subdued in the pervading gray. She saw a clump of greater trees in the upper middle distance.

"'Bout a thousand feet straight in, Miss—and up—under them big trees. You'll see his shanty before you're half-way. Just keep your eye on them elums. He'd be down here if it was any kind of weather. Guess you're glad. D'ruther go alone and find him there, wouldn't you?"

"Yes. . . . And now I want to give you this, please."

He shook his head.

She could not leave him so. "For Lizzie—she's so steady. I'm rich . . . and I'll be much happier—going to the bare-headed man. Please—for me——"

"Don't you take that robe off!" he said suddenly. "I don't want it—jumpin' in and out. I never take it out of the office till snow flies. He'll bring it down to the box, when I'm passin' to-morrow. Why, you'd get all soaked, Miss—a-goin' up to him. . . . Well, I'll take the money for Lizzie—if you're rich—but it's ridiculous much, and I'd have fetched you for nothin'."

She pressed his hand in both of hers and turned away through the break in the fence. . . . It seemed darker; and when the grinding of the tires on the wet gravel died away, the dripping silence came home to her, alien and fearful. . . . She had seen the name; soon she would see his house—but this was no man's land, an after-death land; this was 'the hollows and the vagueness of light,' of which he had written. . . .

She saw the house and faltered on. She had not the strength to call. . . . On the slope to the great trees the burden of the heavy robe would have borne her to the ground, had she not let it fall from her. . . . She could not believe the padlock on the door, felt it with her hands, the weight and the brass of it. It was hard for her to understand the cruel cold of it—as for a child that has never been hurt intentionally. She sank to her knees and prayed that it was not there. . . . But it was. The reality entered her brain, the thick icy metal of it.

"Betty Berry—Betty Berry, I am coming!"

She lifted her head in the rain. His call was like a thought of her own, but sharper, truer. This was his door. He was coming. It was still light. She wanted to sleep again, but the death-like cold warned her. She would die before he came. . . .

She raised herself against the door. The black heap of the fur-robe on the slope held her eyes. . . . On the way to it she fainted again; again the cold rain roused her. . . . Always on the borders of the rousing, she heard it:

“Betty Berry—Betty Berry, I am coming!”

She knelt in the wet leaves beside the robe . . . her thoughts turned back to the night—the goodness of the men, their tender voices. . . . There was a calling up in the dusk among the trees. Yes, she must lie at his door. Men were good; the lock alone had hurt her. His Guardian had put it there. . . . Upward she crawled, dragging the robe.

“Yes, you are coming!” she answered. Always when the cold rain roused her, she would answer, and crawl a little farther with the robe. At the door at last, she lay down beneath it. . . .

Still again his calling roused her. It was darker—but not yet night. . . .

“Betty Berry—Betty Berry, I am coming!”

It was nearer.

“I knew you would let me in,” she tried to say, and then—voices. . . . It seemed as if the porter of the Old South had come. . . . His voice lulled her, and his smile was the glow of the home-hearth.

## 8

**S**HE was lying upon the single narrow bed. . . . Something long ago had been premonitive of this. Morning’s mind, too, caught up the remembrance of Moto-san and the Japanese Inn. . . . He watched. Sometimes he said with all his will that she must not die. She could not die, when his will was dominant, but he was exhausted; his will-power flagged frequently.

All day yesterday in the train he had held her in his mind—sent his calls to her across the miles. From dif-



ferent stations he had telegraphed to Jake at Hackensack, to Jethro at the post-office, and to his neighbor, the dairyman, who had a telephone. Jethro had been the first to reach the cabin, but it was nearly dusk then. The others were quick to appear. Jethro found her at the door, partly covered in the furry robe. That robe crowned him in Morning's mind. They had broken in the door, and lit the fire. Morning reached the cabin at nine. Jethro spoke of a doctor.

"I'm the doctor," Morning said. The three had left him.

It was now after midnight. She had not aroused. Old scenes quivered across the surface of her consciousness, starting a faintly mumbled sentence now and then: The Armory, the first kiss, the road to Baltimore, letters, hurried journeys, the Guardian; and much about the latest journey—from cab to station, from porter to Pullman, from car to clerk to carrier. He saw how the night and the day had used her final strength. Always the Guardian intervened to break her will, and Morning did not understand. There were other enemies; the studio, the nurse, the padlock, and the rain. After brief hushes, she would speak of his coming, or answer his calling.

It was the one theme of his life even now—the great thing Betty Berry had done. It awed and chilled him to realize how coarse-fibered he had been, so utterly impervious, not to sense the nature of the force that had upheld him, nor the quality of the bestowals. . . . There was a rending about it, and yet it was all so quiet now. It seemed to him that a man's life is husk after husk of illusion, that the illusions are endless. He had torn them away, one after another, thinking each time that he had come to the grain. . . . And what was the sum of his finding so far? That good is eternal; that man loves God best by serving men; that greatness is in the working, not in the result; that a man who has found his work has found the soul's sunlight, and that

service for men is its rain. Surely, these are not husks.

. . . It had been a hard, weary way. He was like a tired child now, and here was the little mother—wearied with him unto death. . . . He had been so perverse and headstrong. She had given him her love and guidance until her last strength was spent. He must be the man now. . . . He wondered if his heart would break, when he realized fully his own evil and her unfathomable sweetness? . . . Must a woman always fall spent and near to death—before a man can be finished? Or is it because her work is done that she falls?

He knelt beside her. Sometimes, in the lamplight, she looked as he had seen her at the Armory; again, as if she were playing; now, it was as she had been to him in the dark of the Pullman seat. . . . Who was the Guardian?

. . . And this was what had come to her from teaching him the miracle of listening alone. . . . It was true. He belonged to that life, as Duke Fallows had always said. She had made him see it by going from him. He would never be the same, after having tasted the greater love, in which man and woman are one in the spirit of service, having renounced the emblem of it. And with all her vision and leading—the glory of it had not come to her as to him. It had all but killed her. She had come to him—a forgotten purpose, a broken vessel.

He would love her back to life. That was his work now. Everything must stop for that—even truth. . . . He halted. If he loved her back to full and perfect health again, would she not be the same as she had been? Would she not take up her Cross again? . . . No, he would not let her. He would destroy the results of his work if necessary. He would force himself to forget, even in the spirit—this taste of the mystic oneness that had come to him. He would show his need for her every hour. That would make her

happy—his leaning upon her word and thought and action. He would show her his need of her presence in the long, excellent forenoons, in the very processes of his task—and in the evenings, her hands, her kisses, her step, her voice; he would make her see that these were his perfect essentials.

“I’ve talked and written a lot about how a man should live—in the past six months,” he said grimly. “I’ve got to do a bit of real living in the world now. God knows I love her—as I used to. That seemed enough then!”

He looked up from her face. The ghost of day had come softly to the South. He arose, took the lamp across the room and blew it out. Then he opened the door. The mingled night and dawn came in, a cool dimness, but the rain had ceased. He replenished the fire, left the door open, and returned to her. She had become quiet since the lamp had been taken away. . . . A sense of the man and woman together, and of her strength returning crept upon him. He welcomed it, though the deeps cried out.

“When you are yourself, you will want to go away again—the long, blinding ways of the sun,” he whispered. “But I will say, ‘I cannot spare you, Betty Berry. This is the place for two to be. We will begin again——’”

His thought of what she would answer brought back to mind the play, *Compassion*, and the Book of John Morning. . . . He smiled. He had almost forgotten. Night before last, at the beginning of the third act, he had left the *Markheim*. He had given way suddenly to the thought that had pulled at him all day—to take the train to Betty Berry that night. . . . The play had seemed good. Even to him there had been moments of thrilling joy. It had been surprisingly different, sitting in front with the audience, from the rehearsals. Of yesterday’s notices he had not seen a single one. It was a far thought to him even now of the play’s failure, but if

it did fail, how easy to say to Betty Berry, "You see, how mad I was alone—how mad in my exaltation—how terribly out of tune? I needed you here. I need you now——"

Then he thought of the bigger thing—the Book. There wasn't a chance for that to fail. It would find its own. What would he say about that? . . . He would say, "I love you, Betty Berry. It was loving you that made the book. And when it was done—how I longed for you!"

That was true—true now. . . . He kissed her shut eyelids. There was blessedness in her being here—even shattered and so close to death—blessedness and a dreadful fear. That fear was ever winging around, but did not come home to him and fold its wings. He was not himself. . . . "My God!" he cried out, "what folds upon folds and phases upon phases of experience a man must pass to learn to live——"

For an instant it all came back—that taste of the open road and larger dimension of man—the listening, the labor, the sharpened senses, scant diet, tireless service, 'the great companions'—love of the world and unfailing compassion. . . . It was as they had said. He had belonged everywhere but in a woman's arms. . . .

It came clear as a vision, and he put it from him as an evil thing—and all the voices. The red dawn was staring into his eyes, and afar off a horse nickered. He held his hands against the light, as if to destroy it.

"I have said it in the Book, 'We have all eternity to play in,' and if that is not a lie—this Call will come to me again!"

And this was his renunciation.

Her stillness troubled him.

"I am your lover," he whispered. "I will not let you go, Betty Berry. Don't you hear—I love you?"

He lifted her, walked to and fro between the fire and

the cot. She was so very little. . . . The day came up with a mystic shining, and the warmth returned. These were the first hours of that fleeting Indian summer, the year's illumination—the serene and conscious death of Summer. . . . The door was wide open to the light. . . . Morning put down his burden, but could not be still. He brought water and scrubbed the floor and door-step. The wood shone white as it dried—white as the square table which was an attraction of daylight. He tossed the water away down the hollow, drew more and washed as the countrymen do, lifting handfuls to his head. Then he brought basin, soap, and towels—bathed her face and hands, afterward carrying her forth to the sunlight. The thin shade of the elms was far down the meadow, for the day was not high.

"I love you, Betty Berry," he continued to repeat, as he turned again and again to the cot. There was an hypnotic effect in the words; and there was a certain numbed surface in his brain that refused to cope with the immediate stresses in the room.

Jethro came early, and was not content to leave the mail at the box. He brought letters, a paper, and a large package. Jethro looked at the face on the cot and at the bare-headed man. Words failed him to whom words were so easy. He ventured to mention the name of a doctor, and was answered furiously:

"I am the doctor."

Jethro lingered. Morning turned suddenly to look at the cot, and it seemed to the carrier that his eyes would have frightened away death. . . . Morning caught him by the shoulders:

"You're a good man, Jethro," he said hastily. "When I think of that fur robe—it seems as if I've got to do something for you with my hands."

The carrier went his way.

This he found in the newspaper—a "follow" para-

graph apparently to the dramatic notice of the day before:

“The second performance of *Compassion* last night to a fairly filled house is interesting in its relation to the fear frankly expressed in this column yesterday, to the effect that *Compassion* is too good a play to get on well. The fear was well founded upon experience; and yet we may have before us an exception—a quality of excellence that will not be subdued. It is too much to hope for, that at any other time this season we will be equally glad to find our fear for a play’s future ill-founded.”

Morning had not known of the doubt; and this was the rise of the tide again from the doubt. . . . He glanced at the package. There was a spreading cold in his vitals. It was from the publisher he had chosen—the Book of John Morning returned.

He was hostile for an instant—an old vindictive self resenting this touch upon his gift of self-revelation. The protecting thought followed quickly that the book was in no way changed by this accident of encountering the wrong publisher. The really important part of the incident followed these insignificant thoughts: Above all things, this letter would help to prove to Betty Berry his need for her. He would not send it out again at once. This refusal would weigh more than anything he could say, to prove that loneliness had been too much, too strong for him—that it had thrown his work out of reality, instead of into it. . . . He was bending over her. A step at the door, and he turned to find Helen Quiston there.

## 9

SHE entered and went to the cot, without words, but pressed his hand as she passed. . . .

“You were there—and you let her get so low as this.”

Helen turned to search his face. "Yes," she said.

"Who is this—Guardian?"

"Some angel that came to her, I think."

"He seems very real to her——"

"Angels are real."

"Angels do not make saints suffer——"

"On the contrary, that appears to be the life-business of saints——"

"She will never go back to that!" he said with low vehemence.

Helen regarded her old comrade for a moment, kissed her reverently, and then turned to the man.

"You poor boy," she said.

There was something cold and rock-like about this slave of the future, looking over and beyond the imminent tragedy. He was helpless, maddened. . . .

"She always said you loved her—that you were the one woman absolutely true. How could you let her destroy herself?"

"I knew her before you came, and loved her. I gave her my house. I waited upon her night and morning. I love Betty Berry. You are torn and tortured, but you will see——"

"She will not be away from me again! . . . Bah! what is work—to this?"

Helen smiled. "Do you think she would have come if she had been the real Betty Berry?"

"Do you think I would have been duped—had I been the real John Morning?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean a man is mad when he is doing a book. He may call it happiness, but it is a kind of devil's madness. He is open for anything to rush in. . . . I am a common man. I do not belong to that visionary thing——"

"You are caught in your emotions. I know your work——"

He drew her to the door, saying excitedly:

"*Compassion* threatens to fail. My book has come back," he said triumphantly. "Look at this——"

He gave her the publisher's letter.

"Your play has not failed," she said. . . . "And this—why, this is just a bit of the world. John Morning at thirty-three—talks of failure. Let us talk over this day, when you are fifty-three. . . . What an empty victory for her—if you failed now——"

She was looking back at the cot. Morning whispered his reiteration:

"I love her. I shall have her here. I shall make her see that I love her. *That* is my service. You are all mad conspirators against us. We are man and woman. Our world is each other. She shall see and believe this—if I write *drivel*——"

Helen did not seem quite to hear him. She drew away from him as if called in a trance to the bedside.

"My little dearest—oh, Betty Berry—you have done so well. You have paid the price for a *World-Man*——"

Morning followed her. . . . Betty's eyes were opened—fixed upon Helen Quiston.

"What did you say?" she questioned wonderingly.

"God love you, Betty. I said you had paid the price for a *World-Man*——"

She raised on her elbow alone, her eyes now looking beyond the woman to Morning.

"He is there," she whispered. "He is there. He has come."

Her hand stretched toward him, and sank slowly to his brow as he knelt.

"My love," she said. . . . "It is all right. I see it all once more. It is so good and right—just as your *Guardian* told me. . . . It was only the birth-pangs I suffered. They were hard. . . . Birth is hard, but death is easy. Don't you see, Helen, he was my little



baby? . . . Oh, you came so hard, John Morning—and, oh, I love you so!”

He saw the fact of her passing, but the deeper realization was slow. It was much to him, for the instant, that she spoke and looked into his eyes.

“I love you, Betty Berry,” he said, his voice lifting. “I love you as a saint, as a mother—as a child!”

“But not as a woman,” she whispered.

THE END.







Page 1

11-11

SEP 16 1958

FR 10 1958



THE LIBRARY  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

PS Comfort -  
3505 Down among  
C73d men.

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 918 143 9

PS  
3505  
C73d



